

Swing to Labour in London spurs Major to step up efforts

Tories to change tack for final phase of campaign

BY PHILIP WEBSTER AND ROBIN OAKLEY

JOHN Major will spearhead efforts to give the Conservatives more positive appeal this weekend as he tries to regain the initiative from Labour in the final phase of the campaign.

An opinion poll suggesting an 8 per cent swing to Labour in London, enough to give Neil Kinnock an overall majority if repeated across the country, last night reinforced party criticism that the campaign had been lacklustre and negative so far.

The prime minister yesterday showed clear signs of responding to pressure from senior Conservatives to "accentuate the positive" as he moved away from direct attacks on Labour and emphasised his party's vision for Britain. Tory sources agree that it could be a "make-or-break" weekend.

MPs and senior ministers want the party high command to adopt a more aggressive campaigning style, although they do not want it to prejudice Mr Major's popular image. At strategy meetings today and tomorrow the prime minister will discuss ways of lifting the campaign with senior colleagues.

Mr Major is aware of growing criticism that the party is failing to spell out its case for re-election strongly enough and a series of blunders have meant that the Tories have failed to capitalise on Labour's difficulties over its election broadcast. The most serious tactical mistake was felt to have been William Waldegrave's chaotic press conference on Thursday afternoon. He had intended to sell the government's health reforms but the occasion was predictably taken over by questions about the health broadcast leak. The health

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secretary's disclosure that the Tories had put the hospital consultant in touch with a newspaper was felt to have been a gift to Labour. Tory sources said yesterday that it was "crazy" that Mr Waldegrave had been left to field questions when they could have been dealt with by Chris Patten, the party chairman.

Although the mood in the Labour camp was upbeat yesterday, they have also faced recriminations about the Jennifer Bennett broadcast. Julie Hall, Neil Kinnock's press secretary, was made the scapegoat by senior campaign figures on Tuesday evening because she was wrongly believed to have told reporters the girl's name.

The misunderstanding arose from what a Labour insider called a "garbled message" from the party leader's campaign tour, but other sources admitted that there was a serious "wobble". It was believed that one reason why Ms Hall made an impromptu statement to the press on Thursday was to counter internal and external suggestions that she had been responsible for the leak.

Researchers were yesterday being accused of "shoddy" work, both in the preparation of the broadcast and in compiling the dossier of case histories to illustrate long waiting lists in the health service, and Jack Cunningham, the campaign co-ordinator told his staff that there must be no repetition.

Mr Kinnock was determined to keep health at the forefront of the election campaign last night. He said the Bennett affair had simply put "more fuel in the boiler" of Labour's campaign.

With the Tories still on the defensive, Mr Major betrayed signs of irritation last night about allegations of negative campaigning. He gave vent to his feelings in an aside about how the Tories could best appeal to the



Pause for thought: John Major at his morning press briefing in London yesterday

young. "I don't think our best way of persuading the young is to point to what happened in the past. Heaven alone knows people might say it was negative."

The Harris survey for London Weekend Television added to Tory worries. It suggests that Labour could win all the 21 marginal seats in the capital. The FT-SE 100 index lost 24.3 points to finish

the day at 2,447.9 as the City reacted to the poll.

The latest survey from the Confederation of British Industry said that although the worst of Britain's economic downturn may be over, a sustained recovery will depend on consumers having the confidence to spend more and save less.

The employers' organisation said in its March Eco-

nomics Situation Report, published yesterday, that consumers were still reluctant to make major purchases. The CBI's monthly trends enquiry to 1,439 companies showed a slight improvement in demand, although 55 per cent of the firms said they had fewer orders than normal.

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Vietnam defectors 'taken to Russia'

Historians in Moscow are revealing how American servicemen were taken to the Soviet Union during the Vietnam war, reports Bruce Clark

At least four American servicemen were spirited to the Soviet Union during the Vietnam war and used for propaganda purposes, a senior defence adviser to President Yeltsin said yesterday.

The disclosure by General Dmitri Volkogonov, who is also a distinguished military historian, was the first official admission of a phenomenon that is arousing great public interest as Russia starts opening the files on Western nationals who passed through the hands of the Soviet authorities. The general gave few other details, except to say that the four had apparently defected of their own free will from a US aircraft carrier and been brought to the Soviet Union. They had since left Soviet territory, he added.

He was speaking to reporters after chairing the first meeting of a prestigious new Russian-American commission which has been authorised by both countries to investigate the fate of US citizens who found themselves in Soviet hands after the second world war or as a result of the Cold War.

Speculation about Moscow's role in the handling of prisoners in Vietnam was triggered last year by a statement by Oleg Kalugin, the former KGB general turned reformist politician, that Soviet officers regularly conducted interrogations.

Yuri Pankov, a Russian reporter who has made a special study of the subject, says he has spoken to a Soviet airman who remembers how in 1962, as a navigator on a transport plane, he had flown US prisoners from Vietnam to the Soviet Union under KGB supervision. Mr Pankov says another favoured route for transporting prisoners was by sea from Haiphong to Vladivostok, and that he knows the name of an airman who was taken to Almaty, capital of Kazakhstan, after being shot down over Vietnam in May 1967.

General Volkogonov yesterday handed Malcolm Toon, a veteran US diplomat who attended the meeting along with two US congressmen, files relating to the fate of American prisoners of the Nazis who remained in Soviet hands after being "liberated" by the Red Army as it swept

TODAY IN THE TIMES

SARA JONES TELLS OF LIFE WITHOUT H



Her husband became a national hero when he died in the Falklands. Valerie Grove sees how his widow has survived without Colonel H
Saturday Review, page 4

LIVING IN NEVERLAND

Hook, Stephen Spielberg's latest fantasy, is up for five Oscars but he has been ignored
Review, page 16



MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH

The cuddly panda, like other animals, can be a passion killer, Lynne Truss has discovered
Weekend Times, 3



RIVER IDYLL LIVES ON

The Test is supposed to be a stream in crisis but Robin Young finds that its charm is still undimmed
Weekend Times, 10



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Footballers' strike looms

BY PETER BALL AND ARTHUR LEATHLEY

A PLAYERS' strike against the new football Premier League seems almost inevitable after the first division clubs yesterday offered the Professional Footballers' Association only half the share of television money it had been seeking. The Rumbelows Cup final between Nottingham Forest and Manchester United on April 12 is likely to be the first match to be affected.

The strike ballot of the 594

first division players closes on April 3, with a result to be announced on April 7. Initially, at least, the players are expected to refuse to play in televised games, such as the Rumbelows final, rather than call an all-out strike.

The union had asked for 10 per cent of the income from the television contract, in line with its entitlement under the agreement with the Football League. The Premier League has offered 5 per cent, with a guaranteed minimum of £1 million.

"We have made a very fair, very reasonable offer," Sir John Quinlan, chairman of the Premier League, said yesterday. "And the Premier League believes there is no justifiable basis for industrial

action." But Gordon Taylor, the chief executive of the PFA, rejected the offer almost out of hand. "We negotiated in good faith with Rick Parry and they go away with an agreement and the 22 chairman tear it up," Mr Taylor said. "I thought we had an agreement for a guarantee of £1.5 million, but we now seem to be going backwards. We'll end up with nothing."

He did, however, keep the door to a last-minute settlement ajar by asking for a meeting with Sir John next week, but the Barclays chairman left no doubt that the Premier League's offer was

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Players' strike, page 38

Jail for 'heiress' in £2m theft

BY STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

ROSEMARY Aberdour, the hospital foundation executive who posed as an earl's daughter and stripped more than £2 million from her charity to finance an orgy of spending, was jailed for four years by the Central Criminal Court yesterday.

Aberdour used her position as deputy director of the National Hospital Development Foundation at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery in London, to deposit cheques given to the foundation in an account she controlled. She also siphoned money from the foundation's building society accounts using forged signatures. In one three-month period she took £1.3 million. When one signature was questioned, she re-

portedly said it was shaky because the signatory was suffering from Parkinson's disease.

Yesterday the court was told that Aberdour, aged 30, of Old Rectory, Wickham Bishops, Essex, had spent embezzled money as though in the grip of a disease. More than £780,000 had gone on parties, £280,000 on cars and £134,000 on personal staff including a butler and a fitness consultant. One party cost £110,000. Another involved a two-week stay at a country house including a fireworks display, and thousands of pounds was given away to friends described in court as "hangers-on" and "spongers."

Sentencing Aberdour, who

admitted 17 charges of theft and deception, Mr Justice Leonard said that she had been described as an unsophisticated criminal, but she had shown some skill in what she had done. "You spent the money on gross extravagance. It is said the motivation which brought you to these offences was complex or unusual. So it was, I am sure, but for two and half years you went on milking this fund. You were trusted."

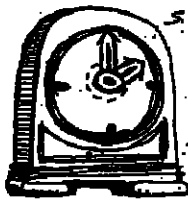
Brendan Finucane, for the prosecution, said: "It is clear many people were taken in by her, close friends and even her boy friend." The Crown had calculated that

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Life of luxury, page 3

200 years go by in a flash as time marches on

BY ROBIN YOUNG

THREE million people in Britain will not know what time it is when they wake up tomorrow morning. That is because clocks



go forward during the night, and it is estimated that in spite of warnings in newspapers and on radio and television, 5 per cent of households will be blissfully unaware of the fact.

The watchmaker Citizen estimates that the average British home has at least ten timepieces to adjust when watches, clocks, central heating timers and video recorders have been

taken into account. With 21 million households and an average of five minutes spent changing all the watches, clocks and timers, including those in offices, factories, cars and public places, Citizen's time and motion study of the introduction of British Summer Time suggests that a total of 1,750,000 man-hours will be spent putting the clocks forward, the equivalent of 199.7 years spent in the name of daylight saving. Another 200 years will disappear on October 25 when the clocks go back again.

Tim Bramhall, manager of the Regency Park Hotel at Newbury in Berkshire, noting that his guests will be losing an hour's sleep during their stay, has decided to offer them compensation. To make up for the lost

hour, he will offer a refund of one-eighth of the bill for the night.

The advent of summertime has been seized upon, too, by the Right to Peace and Quiet Campaign which has launched a poster deprecating noisy summer pursuits and demanding extra police powers to deal with noise complaints. The campaign organiser, Valerie Gibson, said yesterday: "Summer is supposed to be a time of joy, but for thousands it has become a time of misery because it is when doors and windows are thrown open to noise. People complain that they cannot sit in their gardens because of their neighbours' barking dogs, noisy children, blaring radios and unrelenting hi-fi music."

The start of summer time has also

nudged the memory of West Lindsey district council in Lincolnshire. They have not yet taken down their Christmas decorations in Gainsborough, and yesterday blamed the delay on work being carried out on the town's pedestrianisation plans.

Of course, many people regard changing the clocks as a complete waste of time. It disturbs sleep rhythms, puts our times further out of joint with those observed in mainland Europe, and is implicated in road accidents. Three out of four people questioned in a Gallup survey commissioned by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents favour clocks being one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time in winter, and two in summer.

THE TIMES
The daily price of The Times will be increased by 5p from next Monday. The last increase was in April 1991.



1X

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Victory for homeless boys 'would throw law into disarray'

By RAY CLANCY

THE High Court was told yesterday that if it were to allow two homeless five-year-old boys to demand council accommodation in their own right the floodgates will be opened to thousands of claims by undeserving families.

The result would be absurd and unreal, said Timothy Straker, for Oldham council, Greater Manchester, which, with the London Borough of Bexley, is contesting claims that they acted unlawfully by rejecting the applications from the boys last year when they were both aged four.

Lawyers for Moses Bentum, whose parents were declared intentionally home-

less after their house in Thamesmead was repossessed when they fell behind with mortgage payments, and Graham Garlick, whose mother, a single parent aged 20, was deemed to be intentionally homeless by Oldham council when she was evicted for running up rent arrears of £150, are arguing that the boys are individuals who are entitled under the 1985 Housing Act to be housed by the local authority as there is no age limit in the legislation. Both families are living in temporary accommodation while their cases are considered.

Mr Straker told the court that if the test cases succeeded

the housing laws would be thrown into disarray.

As an extreme example, he said, a council tenant could deliberately get rid of some perfectly satisfactory accommodation after taking a dislike to it and obtain a new home, simply because his child went along to the local authority and said: "Another one, please."

He said it was "manifestly absurd to suppose that a four-year-old can make an application". The application did not stand up in law because it was brought in reality by the child's parents rather than the infant concerned. It was a "transparent device to get round the housing act".

Brenda Morris, for Bexley council, referring to letters between Moses Bentum and the local authority, said it was quite clear that they were signed by the boy's father.

George Warr, counsel for Graham Garlick, accused the local authorities of shutting the door on the desperate plight of young children who were homeless and vulnerable. Councils had wide duties and powers, under the 1985 Housing Act and the 1989 Children Act, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and family life, he said.

Mr David Watkinson, counsel for Moses, said a four-year-old was quite capable of asking to be housed in his own right because a child of that age could understand the fact that he or she has not got a home. "Once one matches that with the fact that in law an application can be made on an applicant's behalf by another, then it is perfectly logical that a homeless child's application can be made by a parent or other person with parental responsibility," he said.

Mr Justice Henry reserved his judgment to a later date.

Film leads to review of school

By MATTHEW D'ANCONA
EDUCATION REPORTER

SCHOOL inspectors are to review conditions at Summerhill school in Suffolk, after the making of a documentary film about the school which shows pupils behaving in a violent and anarchic way.

The education department said yesterday that Summerhill, a progressive independent school where the 63 pupils can do what they like, was given a clean bill of health by the inspectorate of schools in May 1990. "The inspectorate would consider the new matters arising from the film," the film will be screened on Channel 4 on Monday.

Zoe Redhead, the head teacher and daughter of A.S. Neill, the school's founder, said that life at Summerhill was not usually disorderly or violent. The school allowed pupils' emotions to come to the surface and developed them. The rabbit killed in the film, she added, had been suffering from myxomatosis and was spared a lingering death.

Harriet Gordon and Peter Getzels, the film's producers, yesterday defended the school, where fees are £5,000 a year. "We were impressed by the complex level of decision-making," Ms Gordon said.

Albert Lamb, whose son

Spitalfields objection is raised

By RACHEL KELLY
PROPERTY CORRESPONDENT

CONSERVATIONISTS are objecting to the latest plans to redevelop Spitalfields in east London after they were approved in principle this week by local councils.

The Spitalfields Trust, set up ten years ago to save the Georgian buildings in the area, say the designs by Sir Norman Foster, and Allies and Morrison, for one portion of the redevelopment should not be given consent until more detailed plans for the whole site have been presented. The designs are for the first two buildings on the Bishopsgate frontage of the 12-acre former market site.

Dan Cruickshank, a trustee, said: "The whole scheme should be approved in detail before the valuable part of the site on the City edge is built. The rest of the development might be abandoned."

The trust has made its concerns known to the environment secretary, who must approve the scheme before planning consent is granted. The Spitalfields Development Group hopes that approval of the Corporation of London and Tower Hamlets council will persuade Chris Patten to accept the scheme. The development would contain 1.1 million sq ft of offices in 14 buildings and about a hundred shops. A separate complex will house shops, cafes, and restaurants in the refurbished Horner Buildings, once the home of the vegetable market. There will also be 165 flats for sale and four acres of open space.



Aiming high: the actor Tom Conti rehearses Walton's Henry V with the London Symphony Orchestra for a Barbican Hall concert tomorrow

Rapists from ethnic groups denied prison therapy

By NICK NUTTALL

RAPISTS from ethnic minorities are unlikely to get the important treatment they need to counter their anti-social behaviour because too few are sent to prisons which have special treatment programmes.

The concern was raised yesterday at a British Psychological Society conference in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, by Alan Leonard, a psychologist at Wormwood Scrubs prison in London.

Dr Leonard, who has been carrying out a survey of serial rapists, found that nearly a quarter were from ethnic minorities and that a third of juvenile rapists were from ethnic groups. He said that the findings had serious implications for new treatment programmes for sex offenders which are being tried out at a handful of institutions, including Wormwood Scrubs.

Although ethnic minorities represent nearly 25 per cent of imprisoned rapists they are seriously under-represented at these special centres. For example at Wormwood Scrubs ethnic minority rapists make up only 4 per cent of the inmates.

The serial rapist research carried out by Dr Leonard has important ramifications for the treatment of rapists within the prison service. He said: "Managers responsible for the new sex offender treatment programmes need to ensure that ethnic minorities are represented in accordance with their presence in the offender population."

Dr Leonard said that there was evidence from the research that rapists as a whole had suffered more violence in the home during their upbringing. Typical comments from such offenders include "dad was violent" and "he hit me quite a lot when he was drunk".

Other rapists questioned did not report that they had suffered violence but did disclose a home life that had been very authoritarian. Comments from this group included "father autocratic

and disciplinarian" and "father was a strict task master".

Dr Leonard said that these backgrounds offered important clues on how to treat rapists successfully. They were people who had suffered violence and could be made to understand the violence they had inflicted on their victims, an important step towards their rehabilitation, he said.

Dr Leonard's research contrasted sharply with other research presented at the conference.

John Grubin, a psychiatrist at the Institute of Psychiatry in London, said that surveys in Britain and America which examined the phenomenon of sexual murder, in which sex offenders also kill their victims, indicated that it was almost exclusively a white male offence.

Dr Grubin, who has carried out research on behalf of the Home Office, said: "If you resist the attack you are more likely to have minor injuries, scratches and bruises, but less likely to be sexually assaulted."

Dr Grubin said this strategy also appeared useful with sadistic sex offenders. "Sadistic offenders are after passivity... resistance is not part of their fantasy script," he said. Studies from California, where convicted rapists were shown sexually arousing stimuli also confirmed the strategy. These studies found that what was most arousing was "a woman pleading... women resisting did not turn them on".

Bishop disputes gospel of John

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE Bishop of Durham, David Jenkins, has reaffirmed his disbelief in the literal truth of the virgin birth and the bodily resurrection of Christ. In an interview with Alpha, the evangelical magazine that last year described him as an "unbelieving bishop", Dr Jenkins says also that Jesus might not have said some of the words reported in St John's gospel.

Dave Roberts, the magazine's editor, says in an editorial that the interview makes



Jenkins: Christ's body could still be found

clear beyond doubt that Dr Jenkins's theology is far from conservative. "Nobody is error free, but the bishop's departure from orthodoxy is spiritually dangerous, undermining as it does core beliefs about the Trinity," he writes.

Dr Jenkins says he thinks it very unlikely that Jesus said he was the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). Instead, he argues that John said it. The bishop, interviewed by

Clive Calver, director of the Evangelical Alliance, says he thinks the body of Christ could still be rediscovered in a Middle Eastern tomb, but he is not absolutely certain. "I think the more I am involved in this, the less likely I think that anything that might be called physical reconstruction or resurrection took place."

He says he did not believe the language of John's gospel to be literally true, but it was "powerfully descriptive of what the literal truth was about". Dr Jenkins adds that he is coming close to an "adopter's" position, which would mean he is close to a view that God adopted the man Jesus to be his son.

Of the move for religious certainty, which is recruiting more successfully than the liberal church, he says: "I suspect that it may simply reinforce the capacity of religious bodies to generate certain types of certainty and comfort which draws in some people, but actually ensures that in the longer run that they will be more ghetto-like than ever."

He says it is not essential to be a Christian to have eternal life but adds: "The imperative to mission is the imperative of the threat to humanity, the world, to our souls, in the face of the offer of God, which is to share his love, his life and to share in his nature which he has specially revealed in Jesus Christ."

Brewer puts 500 pubs up for sale

By PETER VICTOR

AROUND 500 pubs in the South-East were put up for sale by Whitbread Breweries yesterday to comply with government guidelines after a Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation.

In spite of the difficulties faced by publicans who now have to pay higher rents on new leases or buy the freeholds, about 600 people were expected at Whitbread's One Stop Pub Shop in a hotel in central London.

The pubs, ranging from £50,000 to just over £1 million, were part of 2,400 tied houses which Whitbread must dispose of before November. Chris Ford, Whitbread's regional estates manager for the South-West, said he was confident the firm could beat the deadline.

Although many of the properties were being sold because previous tenants had been forced out by the changes, Mr Ford said that annual turnover in pub tenancies has run at around 20 per cent anyway. "Some move to buy elsewhere and some have chosen to leave the industry."

Buyers included former pub tenants and leaseholders, with a strong presence of redundant workers and retiring members of the police and armed forces.

Fred Osmond, aged 45, and his wife Dee were looking for a pub to buy yesterday. Mr Osmond, a warrant officer in the Royal Corps of Transport for the past 24 years, retires this summer. He plans to put his £35,000 gratuity down towards the freehold of a pub in the South-East.

Mrs Osmond, an interior designer and dress maker, was undaunted by the prospect of starting up in business as a contracting industry. "Even if God forbid, the business didn't take off, we'd have a roof over our heads," she said. "It's something we've wanted to do for a long time."

Judge wins fight over young drinkers

A judge yesterday won a courtroom battle to oust the landlord of the pub he called "Mothercare" because of under-age drinkers.

Recorder Charles Barton QC said youngsters, some as young as 15, filled The Mall pub near his £350,000 three-storey Victorian town house in Clifton, Bristol. They came out at closing time chanting, vomiting and smashing glasses.

Pub bosses yesterday announced radical changes to keep the peace in the residential area and save the licence.

Mr Barton, aged 43, said he waded through pools of vomit and urine to reach his front door just yards away. In desperation, Mr Barton said he had hired undercover agent Michael Osborne to spy on the crowds.

A recorder on the Crown Court Western circuit, Mr Barton had earlier objected to a licence renewal at Bristol Magistrates' Court on grounds including obscenity and under-aged drinking.

IRA rockets bunker found

A significant quantity of IRA arms has been found in a waterlogged bunker near Askeaton in Co Limerick. At least seven home-made rockets complete with spare parts and ammunition as well as a number of guns were uncovered, police said.

The find came after police found a rocket launcher in a car and held two men for questioning. It is the latest in a series of arms dumps found in the region during a continuing police anti-terrorist operation. The IRA built the bunkers in the mid-1980s to store arms from Libya.

Casino gun raid nets £200,000

Two armed robbers are believed to have stolen almost £200,000 in a raid on a casino in Leicester Square, central London, yesterday.

The men, both white, knocked at the back door of the Napoleon casino at 1pm and a chef who answered was handcuffed, had a hood put over his head and was led downstairs, police said. Staff were then ordered out of the cash room and the money stolen. No shots were fired and no one was injured. The casino was closed at the time. Police said that the robbery looked like a professional job.

£18,500 for VC

A Victoria Cross won by a Company Sergeant Major Frederick Barber of The Royal Welsh Fusiliers during the first world war was bought by his regimental museum for £18,500 at Spink's in London yesterday. CSM Barber won the VC at Festubert on May 16, 1915, when he led a party of eight men to clear 500 yards of German trenches, capturing three officers and 102 men.

Rapist jailed

A prisoner on the run who raped a woman three times near Vauxhall Bridge, central London, in November 1990, was jailed for eight years by the Central Criminal Court. Paul Sherlock, aged 27, who had been serving six years for rape, had absconded two months earlier while on leave for a funeral. His victim had agreed to meet him after he charmed her at Victoria station.

CORRECTIONS

Caroline Steel is a spokeswoman for the Royal Society for Nature Conservation and not English Nature as reported yesterday.

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TV shows cultivate couch potato

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

WATCHING television can seriously slow your metabolism and cause young girls to burn calories more slowly than when lying in bed, according to an American psychologist.

Television may induce "a kind of deep relaxation experience" that turns down metabolism - but it could depend on the kind of programme. Robert Klesges, of Memphis State University in Tennessee, believes.

Professor Klesges was investigating the well-established link between obesity and watching television. Statistically, the more you watch the fatter you are likely to be, but the reason is unknown.

People have speculated that TV addicts get fat because they sit in front of the screen eating popcorn or sweets or because they do less exercise. The fact they also watch a lot of food advertisements could also have a bearing. Nobody had looked at the influence of the programmes.

Professor Klesges and Mary Lee Shelton, a research student, selected 32 girls aged 7-11 and measured their metabolic rate when resting on a bed. A plastic hood was put loosely over the head of each girl and the oxygen breathed in and the carbon dioxide breathed out measured. Once the baseline rates for each girl had been

measured, the television was turned on, showing a sit-com called *The Wonder Years*.

To their surprise, the girls' metabolic rate fell below the resting rate. The metabolic rate of overweight girls fell 16.5 per cent and normal-weight girls 12.5 per cent.

Professor Klesges suspects the effect applies to boys, too, and he wants to look for it in adults. If it is common to all these groups, it could explain why couch potatoes tend to be fat. As their metabolism slows, the calories they take in as food can be converted into only fat. He would also like to see if more action-oriented programmes had different effects.



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موتنامة للصالح

'Lady' Aberdour jailed after two-year spree that saw £2.4 million lavished on cars, servants and parties

Book-keeper spent charity's funds on a life of luxury

By STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

ROSEMARY Aberdour may not be the biggest embezzler the British courts have seen, but she will certainly go down as one of the most stylish. She was sentenced to four years in prison by the Central Criminal Court yesterday after spending £2.4 million on a life of unabashed luxury, which included a Bentley, country house parties, helicopter jaunts and a two-week Caribbean cruise on a 137ft yacht.

Aberdour became a familiar figure in the offices of expensive professional party organisers. She spent £40,000 on a Caribbean cruise for her home and £65,000 for a party in London Docklands. Her marble-floored flat was decorated with silk and satin, fitted with an indoor swimming pool and an £11,000 baby grand piano, and stocked with champagne.

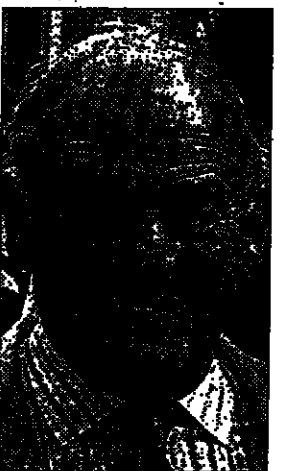
She told friends that the money came from a £20 million family inheritance, and passed among them as the newly entitled Lady Aberdour. She told her family that the flat came with her job of raising funds for charity by entertaining wealthy potential donors. The luxury did indeed come from her £21,000 job as book-keeper, secretary and deputy director of a development foundation attached to the national hospital for neurology and neurosurgery in Bloomsbury. She stole it.

Aberdour joined the small foundation office on a salary of £9,000 in 1986, as one of three staff working to raise £10 million towards a new wing for the hospital. In 1988, she took over running an annual charity ball called the Queen Square Ball, and the foundation came to recognise her as a highly successful money raiser. In the years she was in control of the ball, its fund-raising rose from a few thousand pounds a year to about £40,000. Overall, her efforts helped to bring in about £2 million to the foundation.

But they were laced with self-interest. The bank accounts linked to the ball were used for collecting funds she stole from the foundation. She apparently began with several small sums in 1988, which paid for a holiday and then a car. Her first target was the crossed donation cheques

sent to the foundation, which she paid into the ball accounts at a series of Barclays branches. They were persuaded by her, as deputy director of the foundation, to accept the cheques which should have gone to another bank. She diverted 300 to 400 cheques, worth up to £1 million, according to the foundation. In 1990, she turned to three building society accounts used by the foundation and began forging the signatures of John Young, its chairman, and Professor George du Boulay, a trustee, on withdrawal papers. This raised £1.7 million, which also went into the ball accounts. To cover her tracks, she forged papers showing that there were holdings in accounts when auditors checked the foundation's finances. Funds were moved around to show that balances were correct. When there was a doubt about one statement, she said that the bank concerned had made a mistake, took the paper away and returned with a "rectified" paper.

Her friends spread to meet what became an orgy of



Young: his signature was forged on papers

spending, and the ball accounts fluctuated constantly. Barclays only once questioned the situation, when she was withdrawing money for the Bentley.

Meanwhile her life as "Lady" Aberdour was blossoming and she hinted that she was related to the Earl of Morton. According to a friend, she said in 1981 that she would come into a title and money when she was about 25. When she adopted her title, friends and staff

were told not to mention it to her family. She suggested that there had been a row and that her parents might have been passed over.

To mark the birthday of a friend and employee, she arranged an elaborate party for two at Conwy castle, which included a helicopter flight and cost £40,000. She took over a Yorkshire country house for two weeks and hired a fleet of vintage cars to take guests to the races. When she took another party to stay at a Sussex country house, she sent her Labrador home by chauffeur-driven car, when she found that dogs were barred.

The foundation was not forgotten. She said that she would be making a personal donation of £500,000 over five years and laid out the first £100,000. She took on a staff of five, who became part of a retinue at her new flat. A chauffeur and an aide were also kept in the expensive block of flats.

In the first six months of 1991, she stole more than £1 million. In June last year, Richard Stevens, the foundation director, was looking for some papers when he came across photocopies of a building society draft for £121,000 with the signatures of Mr Young and Professor du Boulay. He thought that the signatures looked wrong and checked.

When they were found to be forged, Aberdour was challenged and said that she had cash flow problems and had borrowed the money. She was dismissed and a solicitor went with her to collect papers from the office in her flat. The initial legal advice to the foundation was not to go to the police, because it might make recovering the £121,000 difficult. Once the foundation realised the possible extent of the fraud, Aberdour had fled.

The building societies have since paid back the £1.7 million, plus £60,000 in interest, and the foundation is negotiating with Barclays. There are writs against companies who received money from Aberdour for parties, cars and jewellery, including a dispute over money paid to Bentleys Entertainers.

Aberdour owes more than £300,000 and has made herself bankrupt. She refused to explain her actions to detectives. At her parties, she never got drunk and always retired early, complaining that no one loved her. One suggestion is that all she wanted was to be liked.



End of the high life: Rosemary Aberdour outside the court yesterday. She was jailed for four years

Trustees resigned over 'lax' controls

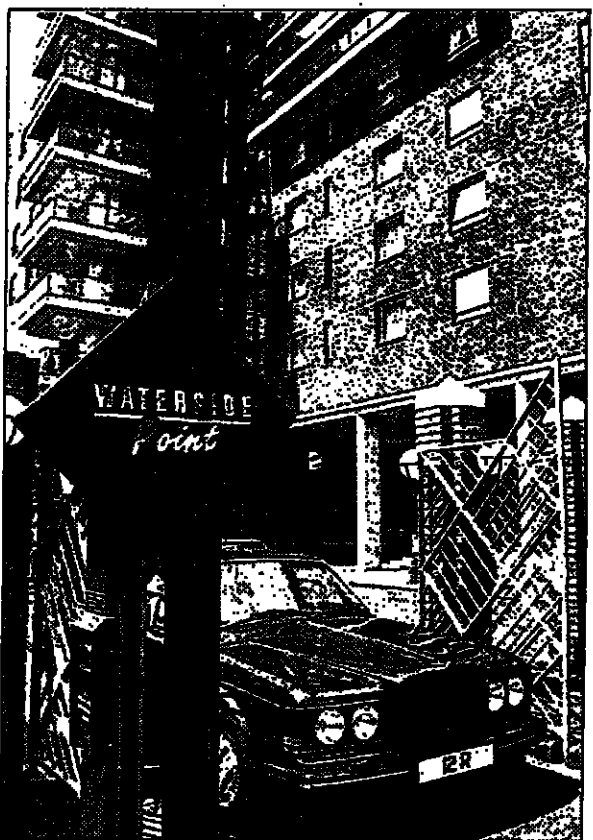
A FORMER trustee has asked the Charity Commission to investigate the £2.7 million fraud.

Jonathan Stone, a corporate solicitor, said he had resigned from the foundation in protest at "lax" financial controls in 1989, a year after Aberdour is known to have begun stealing over a third of the foundation's funds. John Young, chairman of the trustees, rejected Mr Stone's claims, accusing him of "sour grapes" for losing a power struggle on the board.

Mr Stone and Will Hopper, a merchant banker, said that they resigned together as trustees in late 1989 because of their concern over the "unbusiness-like" way they thought the foundation was being run. They left the board after Mr Hopper had been defeated in a proposal for Mr Young to be appointed president and for Mr Stone to take his place as chairman. "Had I

been in charge, Aberdour would have been out on her ear within minutes," Mr Stone said. "Basically she was a secretary, and not a very good one, but she was given the fancy title of deputy director. I knew her to be incompetent as an administrator though I never suspected impropriety."

He has written to the commission seeking an investigation because of the jeopardy to the foundation's fund-raising ability and the harm publicity could have on other appeals. The commission said a decision on whether to investigate would be taken when it was known how much the trustees had been able to recover. □ The chauffeur, Dean Burman, aged 25, left penniless after living in an expensive flat supposedly at Aberdour's expense, has joined the Navy.



Riverside home: the development in Battersea where Aberdour had a £123,000-a-year flat

Peaky dog sent for a walk in Scotland

NO EXPENSE was spared by Rosemary Aberdour in going through about £2.4 million in two years. Her luxuries included:

The parties: a £65,000 "funfair" theme party in Docklands; a £50,000 birthday celebration at the Savoy, whose Abraham Lincoln Room was turned into a Chinese temple; hiring Thornton Watlass Hall in North Yorkshire for two weeks of revelry. The nightly parties included a Halloween bash where "bodies" jumped out of coffins. The fortnight climaxed in a huge fireworks and laser show.

The dog: when her black Labrador, Jeeves, was looking peaky, she hired a car and driver to take him for a walk in the Scottish hills — from London and back.

The cars: Aberdour spent £75,000 on car hire while employing a full-time chauffeur for her £70,000

THE LIFESTYLE

Mercedes convertible and £57,000 Bentley. Cars she bought for five members of her staff included a Toyota sports car.

The antiques: accountants located bills totalling £235,000. She had an £8,000 dining table, lit by a £10,000 chandelier.

The flats: her penthouse in a development overlooking the Thames at Battersea cost £2,250 a week to rent. A swimming pool on the second floor had separate male and female changing rooms.

The servants: her chauffeur was given a £400-a-week, two-bedroom flat downstairs. She also housed her chef and butler, and employed a bodyguard and two full-time secretaries.

The champagne: in one week, she spent £14,000 on 20 cases of 1982 Dom Perignon. As a birthday treat for a friend, she filled a bath with 240 bottles of champagne.

ROSEMARY ABERDOUR'S SPENDING SPREE

Parties	£750,000
Credit cards	£251,515
Furniture/linings	£236,541
Cars & car hire	£286,843
Flat (rent)	£214,465
Jewellery	£171,667
Cash	£174,714
Staff wages	£134,219
Travel	£100,000
Flowers	£53,383
Wines	£34,644
Clothes	£23,620
TOTAL	£2,458,837

Schools are suffering from budget swings, heads told

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

STATE schools need protection from unpredictable budget swings and irrational variations between authorities, John Sutton, general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association, said yesterday.

Mr Sutton told his association's annual conference in Cardiff that an unnamed secondary school in the north of England had lost £200,000 from its budget despite having more pupils this year and no surplus staffing. "Is the disruption which changes of that magnitude will inevitably make to the education of children in that school, let

alone the work of scarce teaching talent, remotely justifiable?"

A secondary school in Wigan, Lancashire, had a budget of £2.3 million, while another of exactly the same size in Manchester was receiving £3 million.

Mr Sutton said that similar discrepancies had been reported in other parts of the country. A school of 1,000 pupils in Barking and Dagenham, east London, had £8,000 a week more to spend than its twin in Havering.

Mr Sutton said that schools could not expect immunity from redundancies and some had been overstaffed in the past. But he added: "What cannot be right is the wanton jettisoning of teachers, the young and those who are in the prime of their careers, as a consequence of short term and arbitrary budget costs." Part of the discrepancy was due to variations in the calculation of additional educa-

tional needs, which made up almost a quarter of secondary school budgets.

Mr Sutton challenged the common assumption that head teachers were "mere amateurs and dabblers" in the secret mysteries of management. They had led schools through a period of disruptive industrial action, absorbed an incessant stream of legislation, introduced a new examination system and coped with the greatest challenge to the management of education this century without damaging standards.

"The managers of the world should be beating a path to our door. We need to cast aside our natural reticence to tell them so, and to add when we do, that it is no thanks to those who have consistently refused to offer more than token and spasmodic support for a properly structured and funded programme of management training for the profession," Mr Sutton said.

Director stole £341,000

By ADAM FRESCO

A COMPANY director at Sun Life Assurance who stole £341,000 from clients to finance his luxurious life style was jailed for four years yesterday.

David Hatfield, aged 42, a father of three from Lynton, Hampshire, used his financial expertise on gullible victims he met at business seminars, talking them into handing large sums of money, which never reached Sun Life.

Hatfield persuaded one client, a retired naval commodore, Donald McClean, to give him nearly £200,000 before he died aged 91 last year. Hatfield promised to reinvest the money with Sun Life Assurance but instead paid it into one of his own accounts.

Hatfield, who had earned £67,000 a year, admitted three charges of theft and three of obtaining property by deception.

A laugh a day...

fooling around to rediscover the child within you is the latest health trend, and has some surprising supporters. "Laughter may merely create a placebo effect," says Dr Weeks, "but it can make a measurable difference in many conditions, both psychological and physical. In my work I have found that those



with a great sense of humour who don't take themselves too seriously are far better off. I would see humour as a major contributory factor to health. It's a pity you can't get it on the NHS."

The antidote to stress — in *The Sunday Times Magazine* tomorrow

Election 92

Barbara Amiel profiles John Major — plus incisive coverage of the campaign so far, with authoritative analysis and comment *The Sunday Times* tomorrow

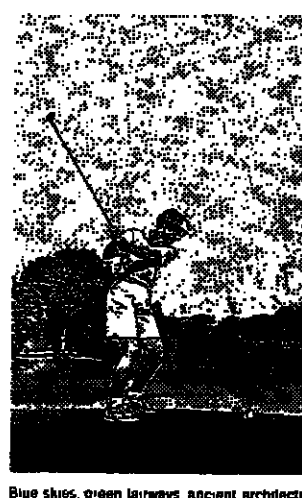
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Lock-up garage opens at last

A WIDOW has been reunited with the family's Robin Reliant after a council error kept it locked in a garage for four years (Adam Fresco writes).

Mary O'Neill went on holiday with her husband Michael to Blackpool in 1988 and left the garage keys at the town hall for workmen to fix the garage's faulty door. That was the last they saw of the T-reg green Robin.

Mr O'Neill died on holiday and Mrs O'Neill, aged 58, was told by officials

when she returned that contractors were too busy to fix the council-owned garage and continually dismissed her pleas. She continued to pay the weekly £1.79 rent for 22 months, totalling £157.52. When she stopped paying, the council said that she was in breach of the tenancy agreement and changed the locks leaving the car imprisoned.

Finally last month Gordon Beever, a local councillor, broke through the red tape and Mrs O'Neill, from Bailey, West Yorkshire, was able to see her beloved car. Mrs O'Neill, who has had asthma attacks due to stress brought on by the incident, said: "It has just been a nightmare. It is time Kirklees council was disbanded. I've played everything by the book and I've got the paperwork to prove it. I thought I'd never see the little car again."

The council has apologised to Mrs O'Neill and agreed to pay back the rent money, along with her legal costs.

Officers help
convict PC
who stamped
man's face



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Officers help convict PC who stamped on man's face

By ADAM FRESKO

TWO young police constables, sickened by a fellow officer's brutality, helped to convict him of assault causing actual bodily harm.

Both saw Police Constable Alec Mason, aged 28, repeatedly stamp on the head of a motorist as he lay handcuffed in a police van.

Police Constable Kevin Lucking, aged 28, and Wozman Police Constable Georgina Christoforou, aged 21, told a jury at the Central Criminal Court of their shock and horror at the violence. PC Lucking, who was then a special constable, said he had

been ordered to tell lies about the incident afterwards by a sergeant and to say that arresting officers had been bitten by the motorist to cover up what really happened.

The court was told that Harold Benn, aged 27, an amateur sportsman and boxer, was stopped in his Volvo in Tooting, south London, in January 1990. After being given a breath test which proved negative he was arrested on suspicion of stealing the car. Mr Benn protested his innocence and put up a struggle. Reinforcements were sent for and he was surrounded by 15 officers and bundled into the back of a police van.

Mr Benn told the court that his face and head were stamped on at least five times by the most senior officer, PC Mason, during the one minute journey to Tooting police station, where all the officers were based.

Mr Benn suffered terrible injuries which "horrified and sickened" WPC Christoforou, who was in the front of the van.

She said that she saw PC Mason stamping on Mr Benn's face while another officer, Police Constable Gavin Larner, had his foot pressed over the man's throat. After talking about it to PC Lucking, they both decided to report the matter to their divisional officer.

PC Lucking, accused of perverting the course of justice because of his false notes, was acquitted.

Mason, a policeman for ten years and known as "King of the Bear", was convicted of assaulting Mr Benn and acting to defeat justice by falsifying notes of the arrest. He was released on bail because his wife is expecting their second child at any time, and will be sentenced next Wednesday.

PC Larner, aged 26, was cleared of assault but convicted of perverting the course of justice in relation to notes and was jailed for four months.

Another constable, Toby Fletcher, aged 30, a former marine, admitted perverting the course of justice and was given a three months jail sentence suspended for a year.

Judge Verney, the Recorder of London, said that when he dealt with Mason next week it would be for a much more serious offence. He said that other senior ranking officers were involved in the cover up but were not prosecuted.

Leaflets to guide the bashful

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

IGNORANCE about sex and the embarrassment of parents when their children ask questions, are to be tackled by the Family Planning Association.

Three pamphlets were launched yesterday by Anna Ford, the television journalist and association president. She said that surveys showed 96 per cent of parents thought schools should be the main providers of sex education. Many parents admitted to shyness and embarrassment, but most young people believed their families should be responsible.

Answering your Child's Questions: Information for Parents; How your Body Changes: Information for Boys and Girls; and, Sexuality: Information for Young Adults (FPA, 27-35 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7RJ; £1.50 each or £3 for set)



Ford: hopes children and parents will gain

Mother's milk has its limits

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

BREAST feeding may be best, but not if it lasts more than a year, a study published today suggests.

David Barker, of Southampton University, has discovered that boys born in Hertfordshire between 1911 and 1930 and who were still being breast-fed at the age of one were more likely to suffer from heart disease in later life. Babies who were bottle-fed did even worse, and the lowest rates of heart disease were found in those who were breast-fed to begin with but weaned on to solid food by the age of one.

The results, published in the *British Medical Journal*, are the most recent findings of Professor Barker's study of old birth records, which have already disclosed links between birth weight and weight at the age of one and diabetes and heart disease.

The Hertfordshire records, meticulously kept by a health authority years ahead of its time, have opened a new field of epidemiological research. Professor Barker has traced 5,471 men who are either

alive or whose cause of death is known and has compared their dietary history with causes of death.

He suggests that, although breast milk is ideal nourishment for young infants, it is not adequate for those over six months old. "Those fed on breast milk for a year didn't grow well," he says. "Breast milk doesn't have adequate amounts of iron and vitamins, so what we are seeing may be the long-term effect of malnutrition. Alternatively, it is possible that the maternal hormones in breast milk may have an effect if babies go on getting them for too long."

Among men still living, those who had been fed breast milk for a year or more had significantly higher levels of cholesterol than those weaned earlier. Bottle-fed babies had higher levels still, but Professor Barker cautions that bottle feeds 70 years ago were not fortified with the iron and vitamins in today's feeds. That makes it difficult, he says, to assess the relevance of the findings for bottle-fed babies today.

Imitation is the sincerest charity

By ALAN HAMILTON

AFTER Red Nose day came Trading Places day, in which the population was encouraged into unnatural acts to raise £15 million for a new breast cancer centre at the Royal Marsden hospital in London. Instead of wearing plastic noses, people were encouraged to change places with others for the day; in many instances the exchange was somewhat one-sided.

John Major, surrounded by the inevitable media posse, was lent a camera and encouraged to take photographs of the press. A television cameraman gave the prime minister his apparatus and Mr Major panned around the crowd, asking if they would mind smiling. Sadly, the cameraman did not engage in debate on the ethics of children awaiting operations being used in party political broadcasts.

Elsewhere, children took over the running of classes while teachers sat at the back. Richard Branson served drinks on one of his



Fish faces: Bank of Scotland staff in the City of London impersonating the weather forecaster Michael Fish for Trading Places day

aircraft, bank staff impersonated Dame Edna Everage, the weather forecaster Michael Fish or the singer Cher, and the chief inspector at Holloway police station washed cars.

The campaign was launched earlier this month when Helen Egan, a bank clerk, presented Wogan, while its usual host spent a day cashing cheques at a NatWest branch. There were

suggestions of a notable improvement in the show's quality. The money is being sought to establish the first research centre of its kind in the world to seek cures for breast cancer, which kills

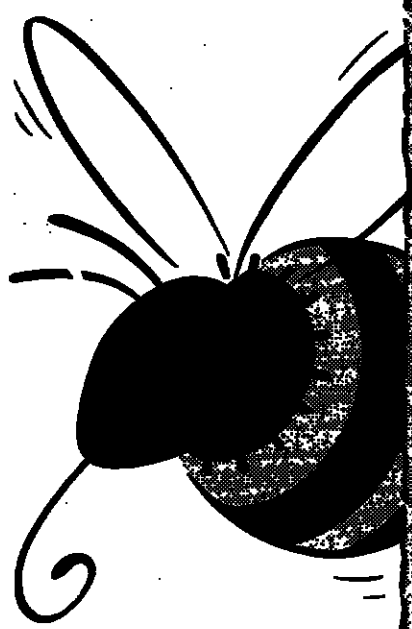
300 women in Britain every week. A woman in Thetford, Norfolk, became the Princess of Wales for the day, touring local schools in a limousine. Pauline Rockman, who

works in a factory at Colindale, north London, became the Queen, handing out pardons and drawing up an honours list. There were no reports of our usual Queen working in a factory.

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QUEEN ELIZABETH2
CREATED BY A TRAVELER'S COMPANY

Traders offer lethal gas cookers as bargain buys

By DAVID YOUNG

THE recession is driving more consumers into the hands of unscrupulous traders who put lives at risk by selling potentially lethal counterfeit and second-hand goods, the annual Consumers' Congress was told yesterday. Ed Chicken, North Yorkshire's trading standards officer, said that some traders were taking advantage of people with limited incomes.

Trading standards officers recently bought and tested 39 second-hand gas cookers. They all failed the safety standards and were potentially lethal, he said. They were

being sold at by "no means" jumble sale prices.

"Some traders masquerade as private sellers attempting to avoid any legal liability. Others look honest, seem knowledgeable, charge modest prices but still have scant regard to the consequences of selling defective goods," he said.

"Second-hand upholstered furniture carries the potential fire risks of the now banned dangerous foam. Sofas, beds and chairs are still being sold without any or inadequate warning labels."

The congress is to discuss ways of testing and disposing of dangerous goods to make sure that they do not find a way back on to the market and will consider what new laws are needed to enable council trading standards officers to deal with traders who put consumers at risk.

Mr Chicken said: "Well-known brands of DIY tools and motor parts are now being counterfeited. While it may seem all right to buy imitation or pirated perfume, watches, videos and tapes, using a saw blade that sheers off or a car brake pad that fails could result in serious injury or death."

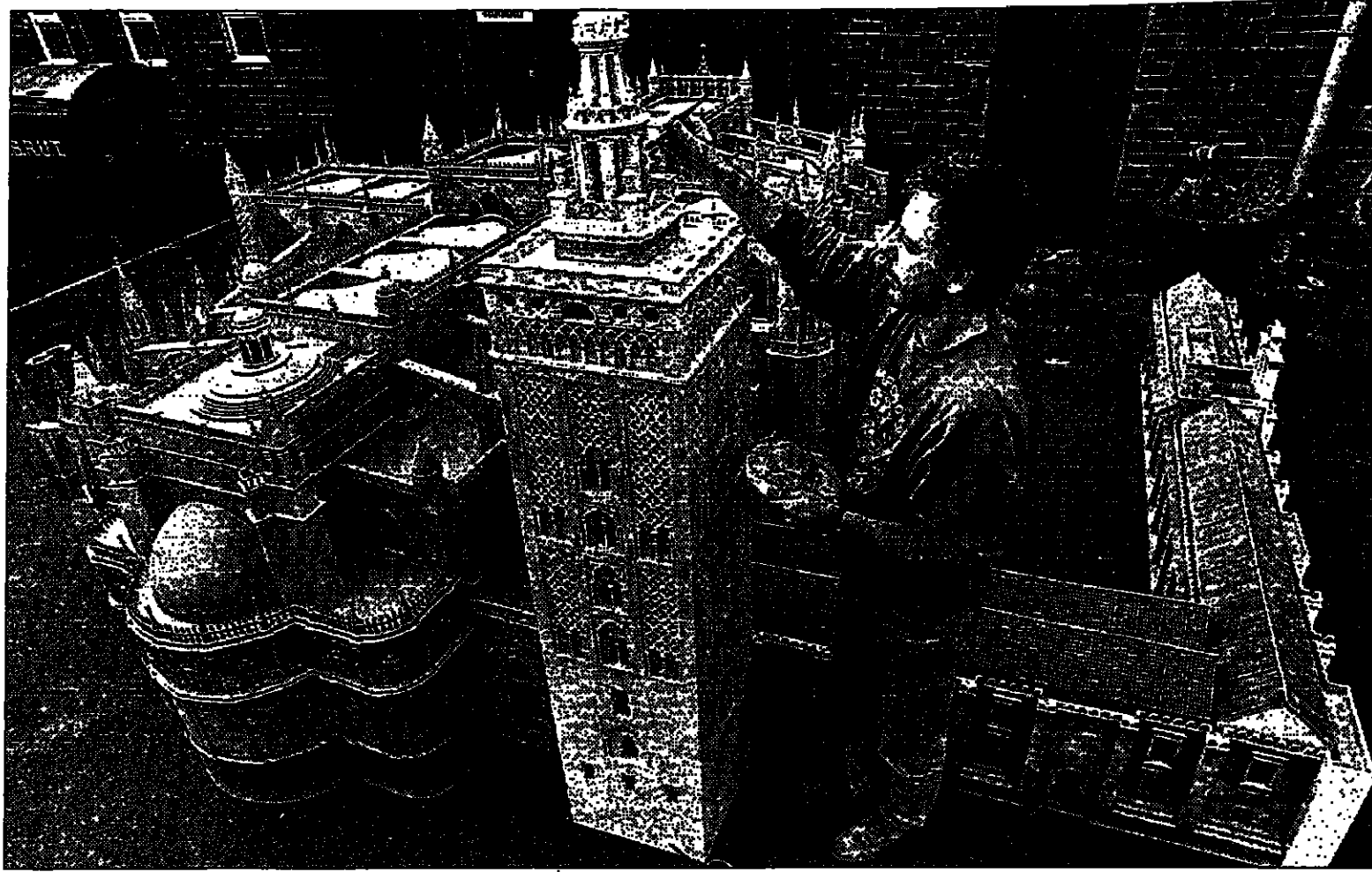
Trading standards officers have also found that many children are put at risk because some toys on sale are still covered in toxic paints.

The congress will discuss this weekend how legislation has driven more people to live on the streets. Hilary Moore, secretary of the Law Centres Federation, said that people sleeping rough were in a catch 22 situation: they could not get housing benefit until they found somewhere to live, but could not find somewhere to live until they had enough money to pay a deposit and rent in advance.

"The government has expected private landlords to play an expanded role in meeting people's needs for housing but government policy has not adjusted to the reality that landlords expect large sums of money up front in deposits and rent in advance," she said.

The fundamental barrier was the lack of housing that people could afford, she said. "Why is it that we spend well over £10 million of public money on mortgage interest relief and other housing benefits, but the poorest in our society still have to go without?"

Shopping.
L&T section, page 16



Topping out: Robert Gauld-Galliers puts the finishing touches to a model of Seville cathedral before it is sent to Spain for Expo '92. The cathedral, made by Albatross Models of southwest London, will be the centrepiece of a model park featuring Spanish buildings

Local authority spending

Councils defy budget curb

By DOUGLAS BROOM
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CORRESPONDENT

LOCAL government has emerged from 13 years of Tory rule largely unscathed, spending more and employing only slightly fewer people than when Labour was in office, according to research.

A study by Tony Travers, of the London School of Economics, published in the *Local Government Chronicle*, found that Whitehall curbs could not stop council spending rising 18 per cent in real terms since 1979.

At 1990 prices local authority current account spending had gone up from £36.4 billion in 1979 to £49 billion while capital spending had remained close to £10 billion a year throughout the Eighties. If allowance was made for the cost of extra duties imposed on councils in the past 13 years, the growth in spending was still 15 per cent in real terms, or 1.15 per cent a year above inflation.

In spite of pressure on councils to contract out services and cut staff, the number employed in local government had fallen by only 4 per cent and town and county halls still had more than 2.25 million staff. Manpower had fallen by only 88,000 to 2,280,000.

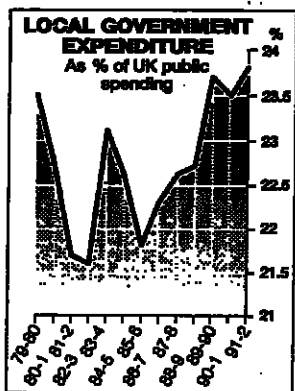
Councils had retained staff and increased spending in spite of a steady decrease in government support, which

	Total (£'000)	Teachers ('000)
1979-80	2,368	438
1980-1	2,343	429
1981-2	2,306	420
1982-3	2,274	415
1983-4	2,300	411
1984-5	2,320	405
1985-6	2,326	403
1986-7	2,352	402
1987-8	2,377	402
1988-9	2,379	397
1989-90	2,265	399
1990-1	2,280	395

* In England only

pushed up the proportion of their income raised through rates from 20 to 28 per cent. The introduction of the poll tax and last year's switch of funding to value-added tax had left councils raising only 15 per cent of their own income in England.

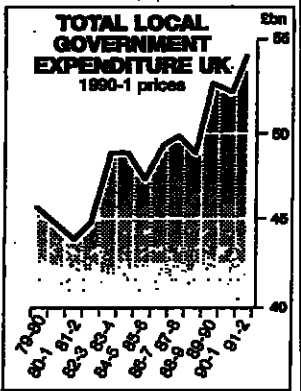
Mr Travers said: "It would be wrong to say that pressure on councils started with Mrs Thatcher. Denis Healey and



Peter Shore started squeezing the local pips when many Tories still thought that Milton Friedman was a new town in Buckinghamshire.

"Given the government's decision to budget for a £28 billion public sector borrowing requirement he might as well have been. But the truth is, pressure on local government expenditure and staffing started in the mid-Seventies and has not stopped."

Before the mid-Seventies oil price rises, local government spending had been growing at 8 per cent a year so the Tories could take some credit for slowing the rise to closer to 1 per cent per annum. What the figures showed, however, was that local people were not prepared to give up services they had come to expect from their councils. The outlook was not good for those who wanted to make further cuts.



Chinese defector fears reprisals

Protesters say Peking ordered diplomat Feng Bao Sheng home because he backed calls for democracy, Bill Frost reports

FENG Bao Sheng, a senior Chinese diplomat seeking asylum in Britain, defected because he feared persecution by the Peking government for secretly supporting the student democracy movement. It was said yesterday.

Mr Feng, a first secretary at the Chinese embassy in London, and his wife went underground last week, embarrassing and irritating his government. The Home Office confirmed that a Chinese national of that name had applied for permission to remain in this country.

A statement issued yesterday on Mr Feng's behalf said the diplomat and his wife were seeking asylum because they feared persecution if they returned to China when his tour of duty ended next year. The statement was sent to the *Times* from the London offices of the Workers Autonomous Federation of China, part of the free trades union movement which grew from the Tiananmen Square protests.

The statement denied claims by fellow diplomats that Mr Feng wanted to stay in Britain because of an affair. In an earlier statement, the embassy said: "His departure has nothing to do with politics. Therefore political asylum is out of the question. Mrs Feng has requested several times that [the

couple] return home earlier. It is strange that they left together without any notice. The reason for this is unclear."

Yesterday's fax from the federation said that the Fengs were appealing to the Chinese authorities to grant a passport to their son, who is at school in China, so he could join them. The federation is believed to be keeping the couple in a "safe house".

The federation said that Mr Feng expressed support privately for many of the demands made by the Tiananmen Square demonstrators. He opposed "wide-spread corruption among Communist party officials and supported calls for greater democracy".

The embassy had found out and two weeks ago he was instructed to return to China with his wife last Thursday. On March 17, the couple were ordered to bring forward their departure date to March 19. The next day they went into hiding.

The defection comes at a sensitive time in the Hong Kong talks between the two governments. The Joint Liaison Group has begun a round of meetings in the colony and is discussing the deployment of Chinese troops and the use of British garrison bases after Britain's departure in 1997.

Lightning bolt brings havoc to house

All the plugs in an East Sussex house were blown from the wall, every light bulb exploded and a ceiling and a wall collapsed when a flash of lightning caused a freak build-up of electricity.

The lightning struck the main cable supplying electricity to the house in Forest Row and caused a huge power surge. Windows were blown out and an underground water pipe burst, spraying water around the garden.

Thousands of pounds worth of damage was caused but nobody was in the house when the lightning struck on Thursday.

Gun cartridges found in jail

A number of prisoners were removed from Penmerville jail this month after prison authorities found three unused shotgun cartridges hidden in a drainpipe in an area being used by contractors.

The cartridges were found after the authorities, acting on a tip-off that an escape involving firearms might be being planned, searched the north London prison on March 12. The Home Office said that the cartridges were found in an area to which prisoners did not have access.

Memories sold

A poster showing the liner Aquitania with the Royal Scot railway engine alongside the quay was the top lot in a £41,500 sale of old travel posters at Onslow's auction rooms in Bayswater, west London. The 1924 poster, by P. Irwin Brown, was bought by the National Railway Museum at York for £3,300.

Struck off

An Edinburgh solicitor serving a ten-year prison sentence for a £4 million fraud was struck off by the Scottish Solicitors' Discipline Tribunal. John McCabe was jailed in November after admitting 34 charges of fraud and one of attempted fraud.

Threat charge

A former Pakistan cricketer, Farveez Meir, appeared before Norwich magistrates yesterday accused of threatening to kill his former girlfriend and causing her grievous bodily harm. Mr Meir, of Norwich, was remanded to appear again on April 3.

Pier flights off

The annual Birdman Rally on Bognor Regis pier has been ended. A local builder has withdrawn his sponsorship and nobody will back the event, which costs £12,000 to stage and has attracted many people trying to fly from the pier without aid of power.

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News and analysis

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Labour

Kinnock team leaps every hurdle in dash for the line

BY ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR

NEIL Kinnock's inner circle is quietly confident that Labour can achieve the record 8 per cent swing required to win an absolute majority on April 9. Unless the opinion polls this weekend register public disquiet over Labour's role in the Jennifer Bennett affair, Labour strategists believe they will continue to hold the initiative.

There is no exultation, and surprisingly little excitement in Mr Kinnock's camp. But Labour professionals cannot believe the directionless, negativity of the Tory campaign. Mr Kinnock dismisses it as "behaving like an Opposition". Labour leaders believe that ministers, too dependent on the Civil Service after 13 years of government, are, on their own, no match for the "hungry fighters" of opposition.

This week, they believe, has been the turning point. The Conservatives were hoping to run four things against them: Labour's tax plans, its trade union links, defence and the Kinnock factor. But opinion polls confirm that defence and the unions, to use a favourite Kinnock metaphor, have "failed to fly".

The Kinnock factor, which may yet have its effect, has been neutralised thus far, less by his party's over-zealous and manipulative minding

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round the photo-opportunities than by his own ability as a campaigner.

And there has been a bonus. The Tories, alarmed by his quiet style, have grown ambivalent about Mr Major's qualities and have encouraged him to throw off the Mr Nice Guy image and mix it with Mr Kinnock. What the Major campaign needed was more passion on the positive from a still nice Mr Major, not a rather unconvincing attempt to turn a Labrador into a rottweiler.

In that context, Labour's strategists believe that the Jennifer Bennett affair has been a small net plus for them. With the Tories eager to run a "Can you really trust Labour?" campaign, it has raised questions about the integrity of both main parties. Whoever leaked what to whom, the Conservatives have been seen more publicly than usual working hand-in-glove with the tabloid press.

The handicap which John

Major faced from the beginning in bridging the gap between persuading the country that Mrs Thatcher was no longer in charge and persuading the right-wingers in his own party that Thatcherism had not been abandoned has also played into Labour hands. Mr Kinnock's team has been seeking for months to associate Mr Major more strongly in the public mind with what went wrong during the Thatcher years.

When the Tories, in order to demonstrate party unity, last weekend staged their rally with Mr Major and Mrs Thatcher on the platform together, it made Labour's point for them. That was confirmed for one senior Kinnock aide when a taxi driver, dropping him at Watworth Road, called the Major/Thatcher rally the first known case of the dummy calling back the ventriloquist.

However, it was over taxation that the Labour high command believed they had brought off a gamble. Knowing their potential frailty on this front they had decided to face it out, going high profile the previous week spelling out the detail in John Smith's shadow budget.

Three developments this week, they feel, proved the wisdom of that course. Firstly,



Facing the press: Neil Kinnock, flanked by John Cunningham, the Labour party chairman, and Harriet Harman, the junior health spokeswoman, answering a battery of questions in London yesterday

the polls confirmed no swing against Labour in response to the Tory assault on Mr Smith's planned clobbering of middle income earners. Secondly, the Tories recognised that their assault on the shadow budget had flopped by switching their attention from Mr Smith's middle class

victims to the effect on the C2 skilled working classes of Labour's spending programme. Finally Mr Major himself faltered when put under pressure to give an assurance that the next Tory government would not raise the overall burden of tax. It is going well for Labour.

But the Kinnock entourage are studiously avoiding chicken counting. The Tories are dogged by a dire recession. The government is asking people to do something rare in a sophisticated democracy and give it a fourth term. In national opinion polls Labour are far from breaking clear,

while record numbers of electors remain undecided. Thanks to the long phoney war which gave time for rehearsals and testing arguments, it has been so far a remarkably gaffe-free election. One super-gaffe in the next ten days could still turn it either way.

Liberal Democrats

The Ashdown show hits town

BY SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

"PLEASE do not be alarmed, ladies and gentlemen, at a certain amount of razzamatazz at the end of Paddy's speech," sighs Tim Razall at the start of another Liberal Democrat rally. His warning does little to prepare the audience for what is to follow.

The only thing missing when the Ashdown circus hits town is the dancing girls. With 12 days left on the campaign trail, the greatest fear of the third party is to be ignored.

Liberal Democrat meetings used to be rather earnest affairs, no doubt reflecting the somewhat puritanical aura of the old-style Liberals. The two Davids marched in and out of halls to some stirring music in the 1987 campaign. In more reckless moments, the party invested in a few balloons. All that rather charming reticence has gone. The finale to the Ashdown speeches mixes thumping music, flashing lights, fireworks and streamers.

It started at the party's spring conference three weeks ago in Glasgow. The rallying cry was greeted with a release of yellow and black balloons and coloured streamers. The streamers were not a great success as they fell exclusively over the press bench, and became entangled in reporters' brios. One week

later, there was the candidate's rally in London and the debut of Paddy's Theme. After a series of warm-up acts, Mr Razall, the party's treasurer, attempted to prepare the audience for what was to come. Rob Norman, a former keyboard player with Bucks Fizz, is responsible for the triumphant, deep bass fanfare which now heralds Mr Ashdown around the country.

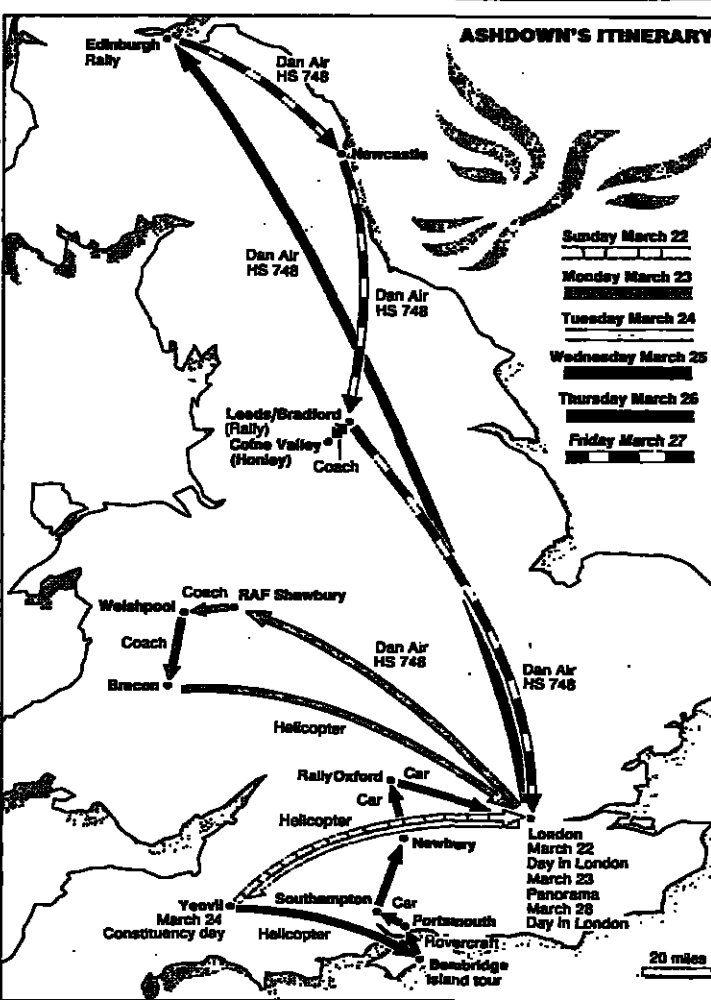
Mr Ashdown is kept back for the early bars and then released to march into the hall in time to the beat before leaping on to the podium. He was equally taken aback at the assault on his senses, as he had not been given a preview.

The ultimate came at Edinburgh on Thursday night, when bangers, sparklers and Roman candles flared up between the smoke-filled stage and the audience. Many of the balloons stayed stuck to the ceiling and white and yellow disco lights flashed on and off in time to Paddy's Theme. The man responsible for the razzamatazz is Ralph Bancroft, who describes his special effects as "political entertainment". "We want people to go back home with the political message but also with the feeling that they have had a good time as well," he said. He sets great store by bringing on

Mr Ashdown at exactly the right moment for maximum effect. He also admitted to briefing his leader, and the security officers on the number of "bangs" to expect from his display of pyrotechnics. But, *The Times* is given to understand, Mr Bancroft and his team have not finished yet. "We have one or two more surprises up our sleeves," one of the advisers said.

In between his rallies, Mr Ashdown zigzags the country, taking his campaign to those far-flung parts of the British Isles so beloved by Liberal Democrats, travelling by his battle plane, leased from Dan Air, and by helicopter, coach and car. His target is to cover 25,000 miles during the four weeks of the campaign, far outdistancing both Neil Kinnock and John Major.

The campaign suffered a slight hitch yesterday when a safety check after a bad landing at Newcastle airport in high winds detected a technical fault. Dan Air put on a grander jet to fly the Ashdown entourage to Leeds/Bradford airport for the next stage of his tour. After Ashdown One, a twin turbo prop, was repaired, it was flown to Leeds and later took Mr Ashdown and the accompanying media back to Heathrow.



Tories

Major pins hopes on 'Eurorail' generation

By NICHOLAS WOOD
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHN Major last night betrayed signs of irritation at criticism that the Conservative campaign has been concentrating too much on the policies of the Labour party.

In an indication of the pressures on him, Mr Major gave vent to his feelings in an aside about how best the Tories should appeal to the young. "I don't think our best way of persuading the young is to point to what happened in the past," he said. "Heaven alone knows people might say it was negative."

The prime minister went on to say that the best way to appeal to voters in the 18-30 age bracket was to lay out before them the sort of future the government could build for them and they could build for themselves through their own efforts.

Mr Major was replying to a question from an invited audience in South Wales where he was conducting one of his "Meet John Major" question and answer sessions. He also attempted to sharpen the focus of the much criticised Tory campaign by insisting that April 9 was a "watershed election", and that the electorate faced a clear choice between two main parties with contrasting programmes.

"This is one of those watershed elections. It is a clear-cut choice along a whole range of issues. We have two main parties, one of whom will form the government. Their policies are sharply different. We would reduce taxation where we can to give people more choice. The Labour party would raise taxes. We will sustain and make sure our defences are secure. They are by no means secure with the Labour party."

"We would continue with our education and health reforms. They would stop them. We would continue with the trade union reforms that have given us industrial peace on a scale we have never before known. They would reverse all that, and reintroduce the sort of militants' charter that had Red Robbo, Arthur Scargill, and others licking their lips in the 1970s," Mr Major said.

He added that while the Conservatives would build an outward-looking Europe of nation states stretching across the Continent and holding out the prize of long-term security, Labour "barely knows where Europe is".

Speaking about the young Mr Major said they were far more internationalist in their outlook than their parents' generation. He went on: "This generation is the Eurorail generation. They put on their knapsack and they go around Europe, and they go to Latin America, Australia, and they come back with much, much broader perspectives than ever we had."

Tory faithful cling to Maggie's Ark

In a few days, someone is flying to America. She has had time to canvass only for the Tory hopefuls she likes best. A UK map showing the constituencies visited would chart what Mrs Thatcher regards as dry land hilltops of sanity poking their heads into the Thatcherite sunshine while the rising vapours of compromise lick all around.

The ex-prime minister's campaign voyage has been a fastidious progress from beach to beach, a Thatcher visit bestowing the lady's Good Housekeeping seal of approval. Departing a rally in support of her soulmate, Michael Forsyth, in Scotland, Maggie's Ark sailed south. Watchmen on the bridge peered through the Majorite mist... was there any dry land left in England? Yes, upon the hills of Cannock & Burntwood, home of her friend Gerald Howarth she went ashore yesterday and then onwards...

"Land ahoy!" It was North Warwickshire, an Ararat of no-nonsense Toryism awaited the blessing of her landfall: the domain of that dry young prophet of fiscal rectitude, Francis Maude.

Mr Maude is thirty-something with a majority of two thousand and something. An honourable man, an intellect, and honest but



MATTHEW PARRIS

not one of nature's baby-kissers, Mr Maude is already financial secretary in the Treasury. He has ahead of him a highly promising career... or not. It depends upon the voters.

It depends, for instance, on the electors of Shustoke, a village near Coleshill, where I caught up with him canvassing on a bitter afternoon. It was 2.30. Maggie's Ark had already been sighted on the horizon, and radio messages received. Mrs Thatcher was to come ashore at Coleshill at five. "Mr Maude", his office told me, "will be canvassing until three. At five he will be awaiting Mrs Thatcher."

And from three to five? "He will be preparing himself for Mrs Thatcher." I had visions of the thin and ascetic Mr Maude in a hairshirt in the Coleshill churchyard, being birched by monetarists for two hours, in preparation for the honour of her touch. First, though, there was Shustoke to be canvassed. I followed Mr Maude from house to house. "North Warwickshire" sounds blissful. In fact, it is a

land of electricity pylons and humming power lines: old pit villages overshadowed by cooling towers and skirted by 1950s dual carriageways. In the night you can hear the roar of the motorways, never far, and always the orange glow of Birmingham in the western sky. Brick houses, mostly detached, are chindog and porcelain-horse territory. Neither rough nor poor, North Warwickshire is not quite smooth and not quite prosperous.

Its electors are not really socialists and not quite Tories. "He says he voted for the Social Democrats last time, and the Liberals the time before that," reported one of Mr Maude's door-knockers as Mr Maude himself approached the house. "He says he votes whichever he thinks is best for the country."

"Good of him, a kind concession on his part," smiled Mr Maude thinly, his face completely blue with cold. At the next house an old gentleman would be voting Tory out of sympathy. "I heard you on the wireless, Clare Short was yelling at you," he

said. "She's a big woman." But it was time for Mr Maude to prepare himself. He left.

I found a cafe in Coleshill in which to prepare myself. In the streets of the town, for fully an hour before she was due, the people of Coleshill began to gather in knots, preparing themselves.

Whispers ran round. "What's she doing?" "Where's she going?" "Why's she coming?" Labour supporters gathered in huddles to oppose, a sense of solidarity and purpose missing since November 1990 returned to their lives. She swept up in a black Jaguar. Francis Maude was waiting to lead her to the door of a new home in which a newly married couple were to dwell. She was to meet them.

Crowds pressed at the barricades. "I'm not a Tory at all," whispered the lady next to me. "but she's — well — someone, isn't she?" Mrs Thatcher, in a navy-blue suit with white piping, like a sea-captain's uniform, bore down on her. "How are you? This is my fourth constituency, and everyone is in good heart..." She passed on, still talking.

"It's like the Queen," said the lady beside me. Francis Maude stood in the doorway, smiling and wringing his hands.

No-one takes off more.

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Birmingham
apologises
for health
care errors

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end of the housing market,
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Minister makes

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NHS dispute

Cunningham
apologises
for health
case errors

By JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR apologised yesterday for errors in the case histories it has used to support its health campaign and said it had taken firm action to prevent further mistakes.

On Thursday, Labour issued two case histories which it had heard from people telephoning the party's headquarters after its election broadcast on health. Details of two of the cases turned out to contain inaccuracies and four families asked for the accounts to be withdrawn because they had become overwhelmed by journalists.

Jack Cunningham told yesterday's morning press conference that some errors had occurred, "which were deeply regrettable", and would not happen again.

"We insist that all cases are thoroughly checked before people are identified. We were assured that this had been done in all cases. Firm action has now been taken. There will be no recurrence."

Labour sources agreed that procedures had been tightened to ensure that all details of every case were checked before being given to the press. In addition, researchers would have to ensure that families were aware that once the cases were publicised they would be subjected to calls from journalists.

Labour sources would not confirm that some families had not given permission for their names and addresses to be used. They denied that "nobody has been sacked. No action has been taken against any individual at this time," an official said. The mistakes had been the result of publishing the details too quickly, he added.

Neil Kinnock said: "The incident will not recur and I think that is the best thing that can be said both in terms of the people concerned and in terms of the continuity of our campaign." Asked if anyone had been dismissed, Mr Kinnock said: "There will be no recurrence."

Earlier, Mr Kinnock said his party would keep on high-

lighting the experience of patients suffering because of the underfunding and commercialisation of the national health service.

He outlined his party's plans to improve the cancer services, to which Labour would commit £60 million. He produced figures showing that five-year survival rates in France for a range of cancers were better than in Britain. "On April 9, those who use and will use the health service can ensure that it continues as a comprehensive, unified and national service, free at the time of need by getting rid of the Tory government."

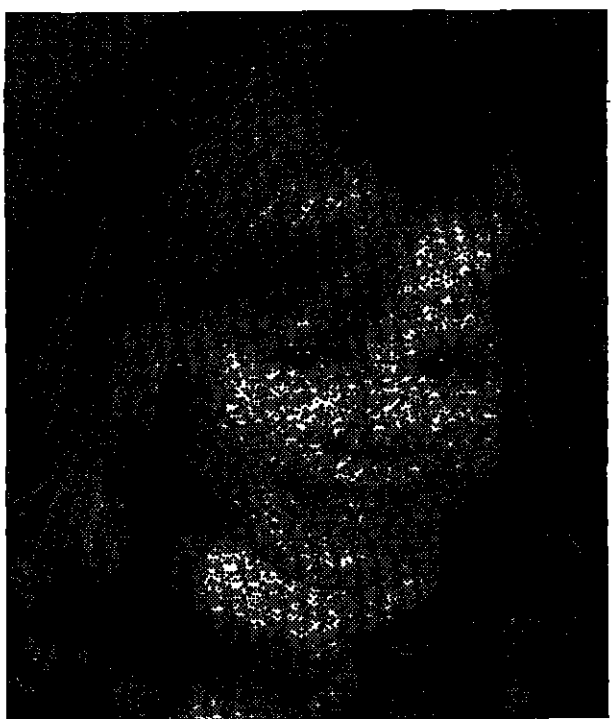
Hospital doctors and GPs sat on the platform yesterday to lend support to claims by Robin Cook, Labour's health spokesman, that the health service changes had been damaging. Mr Cook said that a survey of nurses this week had shown that they preferred Labour's health policies by a factor of two to one; another survey found that most GPs believed the government was intent on privatising the NHS.

At the British Medical Association's conference on Thursday, doctors reaffirmed their opposition to the reforms. Sir Christopher Booth, former president of the BMA, said doctors were worried about the progressive Americanisation of British medicine.

Doctors' ethics: Doctors are bound not to give details about a patient without his or her consent (Jeremy Lawrence writes). But there is no guidance governing situations where patients allow their names to be given to reporters and their cases to be discussed in the media.

The General Medical Council, the doctors' disciplinary body, said that doctors "should not discuss a case until they have obtained consent themselves from the patient". It was not sufficient to rely on an assurance from a journalist or from a political party.

Peter Riddell, page 16



Jennifer Bennett: her case started the dispute

Minister makes early exit

The dispute over Labour's NHS election broadcast dogged William Waldegrave during a tour of hospitals in the West Midlands yesterday.

Mr Waldegrave cancelled his planned appearance at a public meeting in Kenilworth, Warwickshire. He denied this was because of his unwillingness to face possible awkward questions about the health service.

Mr Waldegrave told journalists that he had to return to London earlier than planned and, when pressed, said he had to run the health department as well as campaign. "I have some red boxes waiting for me."

He was pursued by reporters throughout the day as he attempted to talk about the good news of health service achievements rather than Labour's "negative campaign". His aides tried but failed to restrict a press conference in Coventry to local journalists. They had

The health secretary cannot shake off the dispute over Labour's television broadcast. Craig Seton writes

feared it would be dominated by questions from national media reporters about the dispute.

Mr Waldegrave dealt with repeated questions about his role in the controversy over who leaked the name of Jennifer Bennett, the girl whose illness inspired a Labour election broadcast. He declined an invitation to resign from Robin Cook, Labour's health spokesman, after his admission the previous day that Conservative Central Office had put the consultant at the centre of the case in touch with the *Daily Express*. Mr Waldegrave said: "He has either misunderstood what happened or he has got a bit hysterical."

After a tour of the Manor hospital in Walsall, which

has trust status, the health secretary said at a press conference that, while someone at central office knew in advance that Labour had been "sniffing around a particular case", it had not connected it to the girl in the broadcast until the day afterwards, when *The Independent* had used her name.

Mr Waldegrave said he had no warning of the broadcast's contents. He first saw it on the night it was transmitted while waiting to do an interview at Channel 4. He was certain that Alan Ardolino, the consultant, had not broken his hypocritical oath by disclosing the girl's name. Later, Mr Waldegrave, when asked whether he regretted comparing the broadcast with German Nazi propaganda, said: "I do not regret at all expressing my sense of disgust at the broadcast. We have had thousands and thousands of letters and calls supporting that view."

After the leak

Hue and cry dies
down but the bad
taste lingers onBy PHILIP WEBSTER
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE great health leak which suffered unsatisfactorily towards a natural pause yesterday.

There was plenty more heat but little further light shed on an episode that has dominated the general election for three days and left the electorate bewildered, battered and probably bored.

As the campaign strategists waited for the weekend opinion polls to see who had benefited from Labour's health broadcast and its unedifying fallout, both sides began looking towards the next phase of the election battle.

Some big questions remained unanswered — how *The Independent* newspaper got hold of the name of the girl hours before the political broadcast went out on Tuesday. It was, after all, that newspaper's call to the consultant that led to him contacting Tory central office, which put him in touch with the *Daily Express*.

With *The Independent* clamouring up — resting on its statement that its story had not come from a political source — the trail went cold. Two theories survived: that one of its political reporters got a sneak look over the shoulder of Julie Hall, Neil Kinnock's press secretary, as she briefed the press about the broadcast; or that one of the reporters, who lives in the area, picked up the story from his own endeavours.

A secondary question was how the *Daily Express*, having been put on to the consultant, had so quickly found the name of the child. The doctor made clear it had not come from him.

For other newspapers, the most interesting poser remaining was the disclosure in *The Times* diary on Thursday, repeated yesterday, that a Tory damage limitation unit had learnt in advance of the broadcast and acted to undermine it. Where were the writs if *The Times* was wrong.

The Guardian demanded at yesterday's Tory press conference the fax. The Bennett grandfather sent a fax to the Tory party giving a warning about the broadcast. Chris Patten has maintained that it did not know the name of the family. Publish the fax, Labour demanded yesterday.

Before the excitement finally subsided, politicians took the chance to swap a few more insults. At Labour's morning press conference, Neil Kinnock claimed victory



in the dispute. "If you wanted to draw up what could be called a score list, then the integrity of the Conservative party in the wake of this is nil," he said.

"Secondly, because of the huge response we have had around the country and the support for using a case as a representation of what is known to be a very widespread difficulty, then certainly we have benefited in political terms."

Referring to William Waldegrave's admission that central office had put Jennifer Bennett's consultant in touch with the *Daily Express* Mr Kinnock said: "The activities taking place in that building and by those people contrast sharply with the play that was pouring out of central office and the Tory leadership. That has nauseated the British people."

Labour would carry on highlighting the experiences of patients who were suffering because of the underfunding and commercialisation of the health service. "That makes the Tories squirm," Mr Kinnock said.

On the contrary, said John Major over at central office, Labour was making the public squirm with its NHS campaign.

Asked whether central office should have advised the doctor to get in touch with a newspaper, Mr Major said: "The point is that the Labour party made this broadcast. They prepared it, researched and broadcast it. It was carefully calculated, carefully prepared and carefully intended to make a political point."

Pressed again on the question, Mr Major said it had been "entirely right" to put the consultant in touch with the newspaper.

Mr Major said: "Labour say people should not go to the papers to tell the truth about a Labour untruth, if Labour have an untruth that it should stand and not be challenged. I don't believe this trivialisation of important issues is right."

Waiting lists

Surgeon explains the dilemma

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

ONE case in Labour's dossier, now withdrawn, highlights the dilemma faced by doctors and patients when NHS funds are limited. The details illustrate the difficulties to be faced by any government in deciding what is an adequate level of health service funding.

Carly Ann Denison, aged five, had a private operation on March 5 to insert grommets in her ears and remove her adenoids. The £800 cost was raised by the miners' welfare club in Mosborough, Sheffield, where she lives. Her parents had been told by a consultant at Sheffield children's hospital that the hearing loss she was suffering was not severe enough to warrant priority treatment.

Peter Bull, the consultant ENT surgeon, later said that many children were similarly affected and "they cannot all be given priority".

Lesley Denison, Carly Ann's mother, contacted the

Labour party after the row blew up following the party's election broadcast. "I was angry when I heard those doctors saying on TV that children suffering deafness as a result of glue ear always get priority treatment," she said. "I knew it wasn't true. There are cases being overlooked — my daughter's was not the result of a clerical error."

Mrs Denison said her daughter had waited two years for a routine out-patient appointment at Sheffield children's hospital for an adenoid check-up. At that appointment, last December, she was given an audiogram (hearing test) and the problem with her ears was spotted.

Mr Bull later wrote to her general practitioner saying that Carly Ann did not qualify for priority treatment, even though she was suffering a "marked degree of hearing loss". Mrs Denison said: "Those were his exact words."

Mrs Denison, who works at

the miners' club, and husband Raymond, a gas fitter, decided they could not wait. "The club was very good and held a charity night. They raised over £800. My daughter did not have a life-threatening condition but it is the quality of life that is threatened. If my child is going deaf that is a priority to me."

Mr Bull said he would not discuss an individual case. There was a waiting list of 20 months for routine out-patient appointments at the hospital but cases of suspected deafness were seen sooner.

"They should get an audiogram within about four weeks and I decide on the basis of that the priority. Glue ear affects probably a third of all six-year-olds and we cannot give priority to all. Most will get better on their own."

He said there had been "virtually no waiting list" for in-patients until the ENT clinic lost an operating session two years ago.

Clamp on
migrants
urged

Kenneth Baker, the home secretary, argued that "effective laws" were needed to combat bogus asylum seekers.

Mr Baker said Europe had been badly hit by an influx of immigrants claiming to be political refugees, adding: "The uncontrolled movement of people around the world is the biggest problem facing the world in the 1990s."

Odds lengthen

Odds on the Conservatives having the greatest number of seats after the election lengthened from even to 11-10. The bookmakers William Hill said this was the first time the Tories had been odds against during an election campaign since 1974. Hills shortened the odds on Labour winning most seats from 8-11 to 4-5.

What a bore

Candidates have admitted that three-quarters of voters are "pretty bored" with the campaign. Only one in four people are "positively enjoying" it, said candidates interviewed for tomorrow's *Sunday, Bloody Sunday* programme on Channel 4.

Green attack

The Green party devoted its only election broadcast last night to an attack on the other main parties. It accused them of "perpetuating policies which are contributing to the irreversible degradation of the environment".

Local gains

Liberal Democrats and Tories both claimed prizes in town hall by-elections. The Conservatives gained Davenport's Abbey South from Labour on a 14.9 per cent swing since 1990, but there was a defeat for the Tories in Nottinghamshire, where the Liberal Democrats gained Stapleford East, Broxtowe, on a 13.4 per cent swing.

Wilson wanes

Des Wilson, the Liberal Democrat campaign director, admitted his long campaign days — rising at 5.30am and going to bed at about 1am — had left him longing for sleep.

Thieves' choice

Thieves stole a £14 face mask of John Major from a novelty shop in Chester but left one of Neil Kinnock on the shelf.

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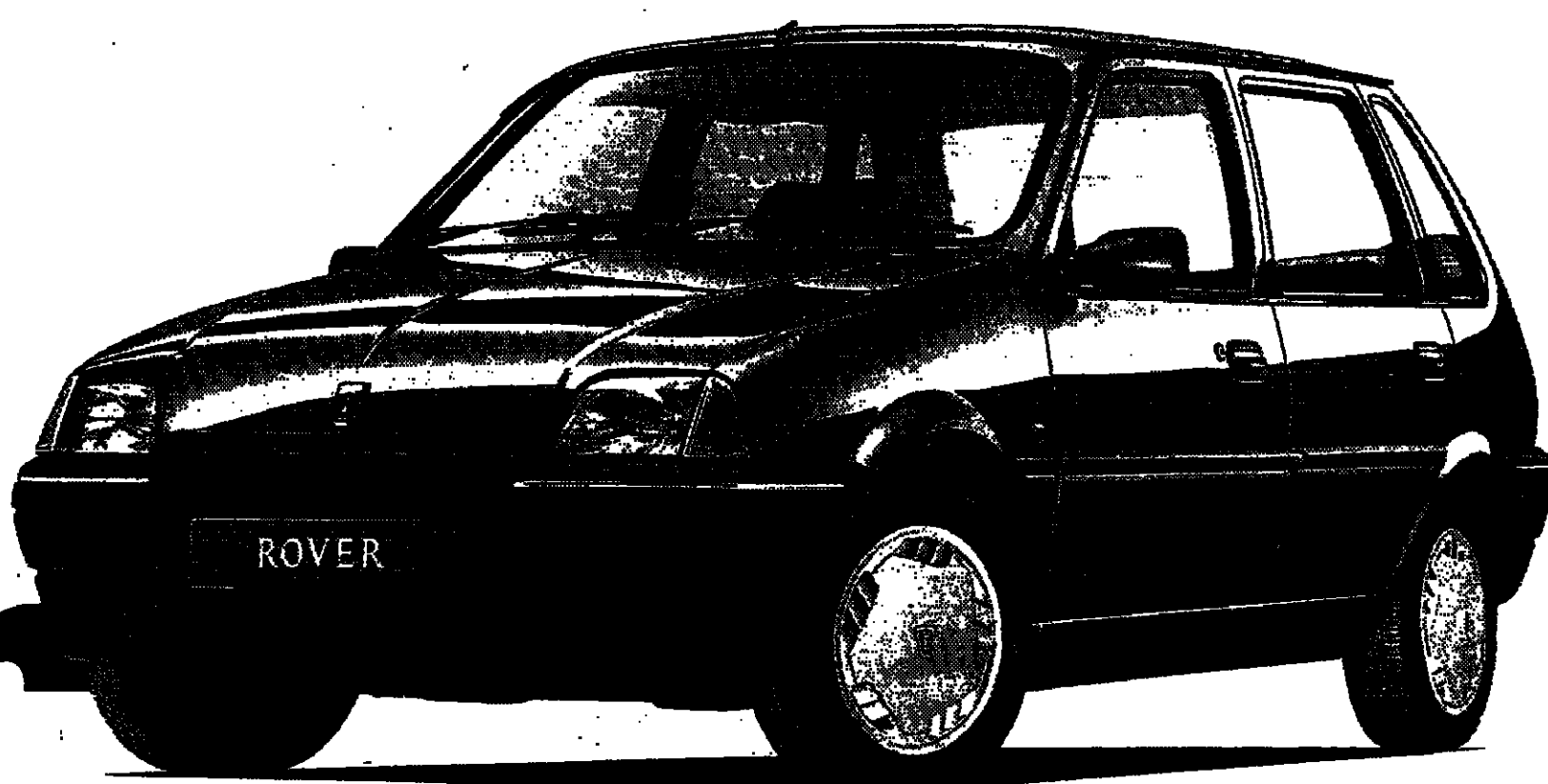
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Major can take little solace from history

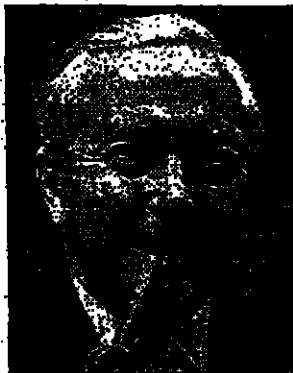
BY MARY ANN SIEGHART

JOHN Major took the biggest gamble of his political career on March 11. No government has started an election campaign behind in the polls and won. But opposition parties have come up from behind and leapfrogged the governing party. Could Mr Major emulate the unexpected victories of Edward Heath in 1970 and Harold Wilson in February 1974?

When Mr Wilson called an election in May 1970, Labour was well ahead in the polls and seemed to be widening the gap with the Tories. As the campaign wore on, one journalist after another wrote off the Conservatives. Nora Beloff, in the *Observer*, wrote: "Both party leaders are now recognising that only a bolt from the blue... can save Harold Wilson from becoming the first prime minister to win three general elections in a row."

Peter Jenkins in *The Guardian* asked: "What will become of the Tories after a third successive poll defeat? Why is the Labour party winning with such apparent ease? The Times too got it wrong: 'It is too late [for the Conservatives] to recover lost ground.'" David Wood wrote: "He was not alone. Marplan found that 67 per cent of the public thought Labour would win, with only 14 per cent rating the Tories' chances. At one point, the odds on a Labour victory reached 20-1 and for a while bookmakers refused to take any more bets. Just before the election was called with Labour ahead in the polls, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the former prime minister, said: 'In the Conservative party we always do our best with our backs against the wall. And it's a damned great wall we're up against now.'"

Mr Heath was accused of running a lacklustre campaign. But at least, in what was later to be termed the "unpopularity contest" because voters were so fed up with both parties, he alone believed he was going to win.



Wilson and Heath: both were unexpected victors — but both were in opposition

The Sunday before the election, England was knocked out of the World Cup by Germany, having led 2-0 at half time. The next day, the weather, which had been outstandingly warm until then, fell by 10F and the monthly trade figures were announced showing a £31 million deficit. That Thursday, against all expectations, the Tories won a 30-seat majority.

In February 1974, too, the governing party was expected to win. When Mr Heath called the election, his party was a lot behind in the polls but the first polls of the campaign showed him ahead. Despite Harold Macmillan's warning — "It's very unwise to take on the Vatican, the Brigade of Guards or the NUM" — Mr Heath tried to make the election a referendum on "Who governs Britain": the miners or the democratically elected government. Most voters, regardless of what party they supported, thought the Tories would win.

Even on polling day, four polls showed them ahead. *The Times* predicted a 60-80 seat Conservative majority and added that it could be bigger. As in 1970, though, voters were disenchanted with both parties and registered their discontent by voting Liberal in huge numbers. Labour, compared with 1970, lost 500,000 votes and the Tories, 1.25 million. Labour won fewer votes than the



Conservatives but the party won five more seats.

So should Mr Major take solace from these tales of victorious underdogs? Not really.

Mr Major's only hope is that, like Clement Attlee's Labour government in 1950, he can squeeze back into power having started the campaign neck-and-neck with the Opposition. The bad news for Mr Major is that Mr Attlee lost his five-seat majority within 20 months and Labour did not see power again for 13 years.



Stepping out: two young women at Chelsea town hall, west London, during the 1970 general election, casting their votes for the first time

Lib Dems attack 'unfair' TV news

BY JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Liberal Democrats have taken legal advice on what they described yesterday as the television stations' failure to give them fair news coverage. Des Wilson, the party's campaign co-ordinator, said that its electoral chances were being damaged by lack of air time.

He said that one reason why the Liberal Democrats normally did better at election time was that people were reminded that they existed. "At the moment the opposite is happening. [The broadcasting companies] have abandoned their responsibility to fair coverage."

Mr Wilson said that he had had informal talks with the BBC, ITN and Channel 4 about what he said was their failure to keep to an agreement that the party should have 28.5 per cent of political coverage. The party had taken legal advice, but he feared that any action would be too late.

He said that the proportion of news coverage given to the Liberal Democrats from March 16 to 20 was 23 per cent on the BBC, 18.5 per cent on ITN and 14 per cent on Channel 4. From Monday to Wednesday this week, it was 18.5 per cent on the BBC, 23 per cent on ITN and

18 per cent on Channel 4. He excluded the past two days, which had been dominated by the Jennifer Bennett case.

Mr Wilson argued that the Liberal Democrats, unlike the other main parties, did not have a tabloid newspaper with wide readership which gave extensive coverage to their party, so they were more reliant on broadcasters. "Television has enormous power to affect this election and, inasmuch as they are reducing coverage of our party, they are having a direct effect on the election."

Glyn Mathias, controller of public affairs for ITN, which makes ITV and Channel 4 news programmes, said that ITN had remained committed throughout the campaign to its policy of impartiality and fairness. "Mr Wilson is attempting to measure fairness against a time formula based on party political broadcasts," he said. "We do not accept this formula as a basis for news coverage of the campaign."

Next week the Liberal Democrats are expected to tackle the wasted vote issue. They will say that, as the party is the main contender in more than 200 seats, it has a good chance of winning a high number of them.

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VOX POP by Peter Barnard

Star quality and a silent secretary

As Chris Patten, Tory chairman, and Robin Cook, Labour health spokesman, clashed on the BBC *Nine O'Clock News* on Thursday over Labour's election broadcast on health, viewers might have wondered what had happened to William Waldegrave, the health secretary. In fact, Mark Damazer, editor of the programme, had asked for Mr Patten and Tory central office was pleased to oblige. Mr Waldegrave being a less incisive performer than either Mr Patten or Mr Cook. The BBC wanted Mr Patten because the focus of the issue had switched to central office when Mr Waldegrave admitted late on Thursday that the Conservatives had put the consultant in the case in touch with the *Daily Express*.

If Mr Patten had not been available, Mr Damazer would have faced a dilemma: should he settle for an imposed spokesman, scrap the item or feature only Mr Cook? Mr Damazer said: "If they [central office] had said we could only have Gillian Shephard, Mr Patten's deputy, we would have had to tell Mr Cook that was the case and then questions of stature arise: will the main spokesman for one side debate with the vice-chair of the other?"

Television news and current affairs programmes, contrary to what most people think, have no obligation to interview people from all sides of an issue in a specific programme. The Representation of the People Act defines balance narrowly and mostly applies at constituency level, where all parties or none have to be given airtime.

However, the BBC, especially, and ITN are sensitive to accusations of bias, a sensitivity that can give the political parties powerful leverage when trying to promote a politician other than the one the television programme wants. Newsnight is known to be involved in frequent battles over the make-up of discussion panels.

Glyn Mathias, an experienced broadcaster who is

now head of public affairs at ITN, says: "Of course the political parties try to hide certain people and promote others. What we have to do is decide whether we simply drop a proposed item, which we may well have to do, or accept a politician who is offered to us so that the issue can be properly aired."

"But it is not only a question of parties hiding people. The airtime constraints are severe as well. Our overall attitude is that we must be balanced, but the stopwatch which so many people talk about is only one way of measuring that balance. Being fair to all sides cannot just be measured on a clockface."

Mr Damazer says that the obligation to be fair and impartial is not just a matter of time. "The stopwatch is one measure among several, but I do not live or die by it."

Some media analysts have been surprised by the way the Conservatives, in particular, are playing this election on television. Derek Tetterton, media analyst at Kilmort Besson, says: "The Tories have clearly wielded some power in keeping Mrs Thatcher out of the limelight, but it is less easy to understand why Michael Heseltine, a powerful television performer, has not been used more. The absence of people like that has meant that so far this campaign has been a firework party that never got going: a few bangs but no real spectacle."

This week Paddy Ashdown answered the accusation that the Liberal Democrats were a "one-man band" by saying that the media insisted on interviewing him. Des Wilson, the Lib Dem campaign director, said yesterday: "At the daily press conference there is always at least one and usually two other senior party figures, but the bulletins almost always use Paddy."

Perhaps the reality was identified by Mr Tetterton: "Television wants someone with star quality, so who do you go to if not Ashdown? Alan Beith?"

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Ashdown plays devolution card as poll slump threatens to leave party in the wilderness

Scots greet silver-tongued Sassenachs with disdain

ARCHY Kirkwood, the Liberal Democrat candidate for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, became almost apologetic yesterday when an interviewer dared to suggest that Paddy Ashdown, for all the razzmatazz, stirring music and presidential addresses, had failed to move the Scottish electorate.

The latest poll, by System Three for *The Herald*, showed yesterday that Liberal Democrat support had slumped to 7 per cent, compared with the Alliance's 19 per cent of the vote in the last election, indicating that the party could lose some of its ten Scottish seats on April 9. But Mr Ashdown's visit, designed to charm the electorate into a frenzy of moderation, was no more and no less effective than the visits of any other party's leading lights.

Mr Ashdown, John Major, Margaret Thatcher and Neil Kinnock, not a Sassenach as he hails from Wales, have all sought to jerk the Scots out of their entrenched positions. The visits, apart from providing a momentary diversion, have left things much as they were. After all, Mrs Thatcher could hardly be expected to change the course of history by speaking in Kilmarnock, one of the richest and most Tory

The debate on Scotland's future will become ever more complicated, whoever wins the election, Kerry Gill writes

villages north of the border. Voting in Scotland is expected to mirror recent polls, which have changed little since the start of this month. In two weeks the constitutional debate will become more focused. If the Tories win, albeit with a significant reduction in seats in Scotland from the nine they held in the last parliament, they will again be accused of having no mandate to govern the Scots. At least three quarters of the electorate will say, with reason, that their preferred constitutional option for Scotland has been ignored. Mr Major has delivered a couple of obscure hints that things might change. Should the Tories be returned with a reduced Scottish representation, the prime minister has said he will "take stock" of the situation — whatever that means.

This week he said that, while he was confident that the Tories would do better than expected in Scotland,



Long road ahead: Charles Kennedy, the Lib Dem party president and candidate for Ross, Cromarty and Skye, enjoying the bracing air in his constituency

decisions on the country's future would be made at a later date. "They are an intensely proud, patriotic race here in Scotland. They have been part of the active union for 280-odd years. It has served the United Kingdom well and particularly if it has served Scotland well. We must discuss these at great length and then take decisions."

If Labour squeezes in, dependent on Liberal Democrat support, proposals for a Scottish parliament would be backed by Mr Ashdown only

if Mr Kinnock made a commitment to introducing proportional representation. And then there is the West Lothian question: why should Scottish MPs in a Westminster parliament be allowed to decide English matters when English MPs would have no say on Scottish issues?

Labour's other worry is the attitude of the business community. Several leading companies have indicated that jobs could be thrown into jeopardy by a devolved assembly.

The vision of Alex Salmond, the Scottish National party leader, of independence by October, enjoys marginally more support than devolution, 37 per cent to 34 per cent, according to the latest Mori poll. All this, however, is immaterial since the SNP's standing has become firmly stuck at about 26 per cent, albeit about twice the support the party had in the 1987 election. Labour's support, at 44 per cent, is comfortably in front of the SNP and Tories (22 per cent), according to System Three.

There are only two prospects of any excitement. Before the election, the nationalists could reap in Labour votes should Labour look like losing. After the election, the Tories may have lost so many Scottish seats that they would be unable to man the Scottish Office.

Liberal Democrats Home rule added to coalition terms

BY SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Liberal Democrats are prepared to bring down a Conservative government that refuses to set up a Scottish parliament, Paddy Ashdown said yesterday. As the party leader continued to harden his terms as power broker in a hung parliament, he placed commitment to home rule at the centre of negotiations with a minority Tory or Labour government.

His comments followed an opinion poll in *The Herald*, in Glasgow, yesterday showing that the party's support in Scotland had dropped to 7 per cent, the lowest level of the election campaign so far. Ten of the Liberal Democrats' 22 seats in the last parliament were in Scotland. The poll recorded a six-point rise in Labour support in the past month to 44 per cent, compared to the Scottish National party at 27 per cent, and the Conservatives on 22 per cent.

Mr Ashdown reaffirmed that, if Neil Kinnock was

prime minister, Liberal Democrat MPs would vote against a Queen's speech promising a bill for a Scottish parliament if it did not include legislation for a reform at Westminster. He was questioned at an Edinburgh press conference about his reaction to a Queen's speech drawn up by a Tory government that promised proportional representation for the House of Commons but not a Scottish devolution bill. He replied: "It is simply inconceivable that we would agree to a programme for that government that did not include in it the establishment of a parliament in Scotland."

A Scottish parliament had to be an essential part of a Conservative government's programme, he said. The Tories were making a grave mistake if they continued to resist demands for reform. "It is this arrogance, this contempt for democracy, that is driving the desire for change in Scotland."

LABOUR'S traditional Roman Catholic vote in Scotland could be affected by its manifesto pledge on abortion. Two Catholic church newspapers, angered that a Labour government would allow "equal access" to abortion, have criticised the party and its policy in leading articles.

Catholics in Glasgow say Labour put the abortion issue on the election agenda because of its manifesto pledge to ensure "equal access to abortion services is available in every area".

Flourish, the official publication of the Glasgow archdiocese, said: "What distinguishes this election from any previous campaign, and what separates the newly reconstructed Labour party from any other major party, is its pro-abortion policy. In this programme for a future Labour government, fundamental pro-life concerns have been decisively rejected." The article added: "Can a people

whose voice has been so arrogantly dismissed really be expected to forget its moral principles by meekly voting in favour of such a package?"

The *Scottish Catholic Observer* said: "Any candidate who is prepared to support the ominous pledge on abortion, which blights Labour's current manifesto, does not deserve the support of the Catholic community."

Flourish said it had invited Tory, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Scottish National party leaders to put forward their views. John Major, Paddy Ashdown and Alex Salmond all wrote articles but Neil Kinnock did not. In place of his piece, Flourish carried a white space stamped "No Reply".

The Labour party in Scotland said last night that Mr Kinnock's office had no record of a request from Flourish to write a piece for the paper, adding: "Neil would have been pleased to write an article."

Where the main parties stand



Labour: a Scottish parliament elected by an additional member system. Powers to levy tax and to legislate for local government, health, housing, education, transport and the environment. Property tax to replace the poll tax.

SNP: independence within the EC. 20 per cent tax rate on first £3,000 of taxable income. Removal of national insurance contributions ceiling. A Scottish general election within a month if SNP won majority of seats.

Conservative: a pledge to defend the union and retain the constitutional status quo. The Conservatives say the United Kingdom is greater than the sum of its parts. Introduction of single tier councils in Scotland.

Lib Dems: home rule with "fair votes" system. Formation of Scottish parliament with broadly similar powers to those envisaged by Labour, part of a federal set-up in Britain. Poll tax replaced by local income tax.

Marginal seats

Battleground gathers myth and mystique

COMMENTATORS have fastened on to clutches of marginal seats concentrated in a few particular areas of the country as the key battleground between the parties. For Labour to win the election, it is confidently asserted, it must recoup its losses in London, or win back the C2s in the West Midlands, or recapture the new towns.

Much of this is myth. No one area of Britain opens the key to No 10. The myths have their origin in electoral history. Each of the supposedly key regions was distinctive in a past election. In 1964, the North-West helped to deliver Harold Wilson's tiny parliamentary majority with above-average swings to Labour. In the early 1970s, Enoch Powell's pronouncements on race and Europe made the West Midlands the most volatile region, to the Conservatives' advantage in 1970, to Labour's in February 1974.

In 1979, early Essex Man helped the Conservatives to victory with double-digit swings in east London and the surrounding new towns. In 1987, a booming London administered by the Labour left bucked the national trend and shifted even further to the Conservatives.

None of these areas merit the psephological mystique

sometimes accorded to them. To form the government Labour must do exceptionally well throughout the country. To obtain a slender majority of seven it needs to gain 100 seats if those are spread throughout the country. Nevertheless, the geographical distribution of Labour's target seats makes the North-West and London especially important. Proportionately there should be 12 Labour targets in the North-West and 13 in London; in fact there are 21 and 24 respectively. (Contrary to assumptions, the number of Labour targets in the supposedly pivotal West Midlands is exactly proportional.)

By contrast, the number of Labour target seats in the South-East (including East Anglia) and South-West is 13 and four when proportionately it should be 17 and eight. In Scotland, where Labour took so many Conservative marginals in 1987, the number of remaining target seats is only five. Below-average swings in these regions would not matter as much to Labour as elsewhere.

In fact, the regional electoral arithmetic is more complicated. Labour's first 50 targets — the seats it must take to deprive the Conservatives of their majority — in-

clude 12 of the 21 North-West marginals but only eight of the 24 London marginals. Two thirds of the London marginals lie in the 51-100 target range, which Labour must capture for an overall majority. If the national swing is below the winning 8 per cent, Labour's ideal would be for a well above average swing in London (but not the South outside London) and an above-average swing in the North-West projection (but not in the rest of the North or Scotland).

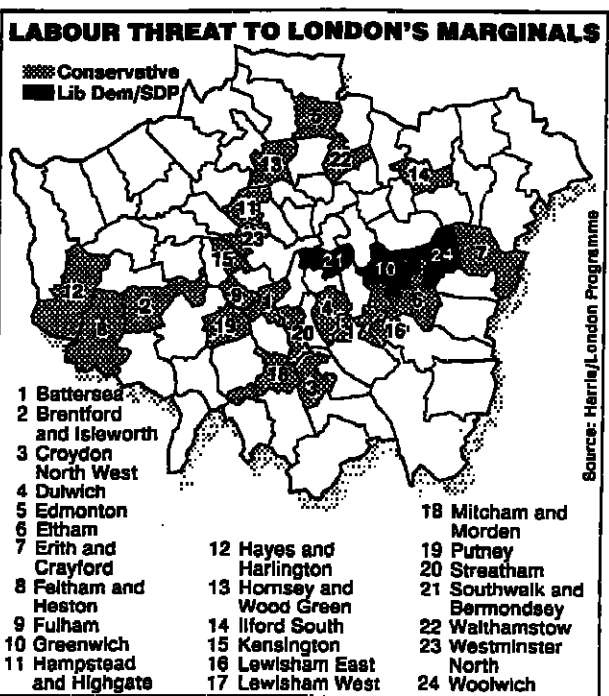
A regional analysis of the aggregate of Mori's campaign polls (a total sample of almost 10,000) shows that the pattern of swings is not that ideal. The overall swing is 7.3 per cent which, if uniform across the country, would give the Conservatives 296 seats and Labour 318 — eight short of an overall majority. But the swing to Labour is wastefully high in the South-West (14 per cent) and the South-East/East Anglia (8.7 per cent) where there are few target seats. It falls frustratingly below average in marginal-rich London (5.5 per cent). Labour will be hoping that the Harris poll for London Weekend Television, which reports an 8 per cent swing in the capital, is the more accurate.

Although an above-average swing in the North-West (10.4 per cent) partly makes up for the shortfall of gains in London, a projection of the result based on regional swings gives Labour four seats fewer (314) and the Conservatives three seats more (299). These are tiny differences but in such a close election they could be crucial. Regional factors will matter.

Ivor Crewe is professor of government at Essex University.



Taking cover: Ken Livingstone, who is campaigning to retain Brent East for Labour, trying out a party political umbrella given to him by students at the Queen's Park community school in northwest London yesterday. The prizes which could fall to his party on April 9 are shown, below, in a map of London seats vulnerable to an 8 per cent Labour swing



Wales

Tories aim big guns at six seats

BY TIM JONES

ALTHOUGH the pits that helped to spawn socialism have virtually disappeared, the South Wales valleys remain monolithically Labour. The old joke about the party being able to field a donkey in the valleys and win has never been tested, but no Tory could ever hope to wrest a seat from a people who still have an edge of hatred in their hearts whenever the name Churchill is mentioned.

This fact is useful to the Tories in that it saves them the trouble of concentrating any big guns in the area. Rather, they are concentrating their efforts in the six seats they hold in the principality which returns 38 MPs.

Since 1983, when the Tories had 14 seats in Wales, their fortunes have diminished, culminating in two spectacular by-election defeats in the Vale of Glamorgan and Monmouth. Worryingly for the Tories, health was a big issue in both contests, with accusations over Conservative plans for the NHS leading to an acrimonious campaign in Monmouth.

Labour, overturning a 9,350 Tory majority in Monmouth to take the seat by 2,406, was regarded generally as being one of the main factors in John Major's decision not to call an autumn election. The latest ITV-NOP opinion poll indicates that Labour will increase its majority in Monmouth.

Some of the fiercest campaigning is at Brecon and Radnor, where Richard Llewellyn for the Liberal Democrats is defending Britain's joint most marginal seat with a majority of 56.

New democrats inspect the old

TWO East European MPs have been observing the British election with keen interest and some amusement. As members of the youngest democracies, they are learning from the battle for the mother of parliaments.

Gabor Fodor, a founder member of the Hungarian Democratic Party (Fidesz) and its representative in political transition talks, was impressed by the manifestos.

"It's so pragmatic," he said. "You are talking about taxes and reforms of the health service; for our people the most important questions are connected with ideology and how we should look at the past. We do not have a health service to talk about yet."

The absence of a "big idea" was a positive luxury, he said. "Hungary is full of ideologies when what we need is a British concern with the little things."

Mr Fodor was fascinated by the idea of doorstep canvassing and thought that the direct contact with the electorate was democracy in action.

"It is a very calm and civilised way of getting support," he said. "We have never done that. Two years ago at the free elections in Hungary we would have been too frightened to do that. People felt so strongly about the issues," he added, "that it would have been dangerous."

Mr Fodor said that had he been voting in the British election he would have chosen the Liberal Democrats because "they are more tuned to the things my party cares about". The environment and the European Community are two areas which he felt had been neglected by the two main parties.

He had enjoyed the funnier speeches of the campaign and complained that Hungarian politicians were

Alison Roberts finds that our hustings can seem ideology-free to an East European

rarely caught displaying a sense of humour.

Tit Kabin, a member of the Supreme Council of Estonia and a deputy in the Supreme Soviet between 1989 and 1991, helped to win constitutional change and the right to self-determination. He viewed the recent mud-slinging in Britain's hustings philosophically.

"Sometimes politics is not clean if you want to win," he said. "Of course it is not the honest way, but it is the honest way. Your election often works. Your election is not honest to begin with because you do not have proportional representation." The television campaign was slick and sophisticated, according to Mr Kabin, but it tended to promote politicians' personalities too much. "The idea of a populist leader who has created an image for himself is too close to my heart and to my mind to be trusted," he said.

However, he admitted that to compare Neil Kinnock or John Major with Chernenko or Andropov was to stretch the imagination. Mr Kabin liked John Major, although the Liberal Democrats would have had his vote.

"I think on television Mr Major was a bit better than Neil Kinnock, but I respect the Labour party because of its history and because it has not been afraid to change with the times," he said.

Both men thought they could work with a Labour or a Conservative government, but the Liberal Democrat leader was the man with whom they could best do business.

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TM380

Russian hardliners seize on suicide rate as political weapon

FROM BRUCE CLARK IN MOSCOW

ONE Russian in every 150 — more than a million people — tries to commit suicide every year, and 60,000 of them succeed, Dr Gennadi Osipov, director of the Institute of Socio-Political Studies, claims.

Dr Osipov was addressing a conference on Russia's future at which participants seemed to revel in black assessments of the suffering and disaster caused by the state of the country. He said opinion surveys by his institute showed that one in five Russians wanted to emigrate, a statistic that he cited as evidence that the nation was on the threshold of disaster.

Tatiana Koryagina, a conservative economist, told the conference that 90 per cent of

the Russian population had fallen below the poverty line and 30 per cent were living at the "lowest depth" imaginable. While these revelations are both plausible, they are most unlikely to be entirely disinterested.

On the one hand, it would be amazing if the upheavals brought about by the collapse of the old system did not have traumatic consequences for individuals, from the building worker who tried to burn himself alive in Red Square this month to the establishment figures who killed themselves after last year's failed coup, not least among them Boris Yeltsin, the interior minister who was one of the coup leaders.

On the other hand, every

scrap of evidence about despair and misery in the Russian population is being marshalled for political purposes, as conservatives prepare for a big counter-attack on President Yeltsin and his radically pro-market cabinet at next month's Congress of People's Deputies.

Another study in Russia gives a somewhat lower figure of 40,000 suicides a year, and estimates that there are ten failures for every death. That would translate into a rate of 27 per 100,000, up from a low point of 19.1 in 1987 but broadly in line with levels in the early 1980s.

Other surveys suggest that men are far more inclined to take their lives than women, and are more successful in doing so. In 1987 the suicide rate per 100,000 was 30.7 for men and 9.3 for women.

The suicide rate is much the lowest in the northern Caucasus, where the Muslim faith and strong family ties appear to provide individuals with a sense of self-esteem and worth that is missing from the alienated world of Russian cities.

Some experts have pointed out that there is no direct correlation between economic hardship and the suicide rate. They say that the number of people taking their own lives has often fallen steeply during wars, revolutions and disasters.

If there is to be a wave of suicides resulting from economic reform, it seems more likely that it will come in the next phase, when soaring prices give way to large-scale factory closures. These closures will surely prove devastating to the self-respect of countless managers and skilled workers who have spent a lifetime learning to make industrial goods and weapons for which, in a post-Cold War world, there is suddenly no demand.

A more precise indicator of public pessimism may be the birth rate in Moscow, which has been falling steadily for the past five years. Only 83,000 children were born in the capital last year, compared with 118,000 in 1988. It remains to be seen how the economic policies adopted this year — policies which have far more support among the young than the old — affect the figures.

From anecdotal evidence, Dr Osipov's estimate of one in five would-be emigrants sounds on the low side, but the figure would certainly be higher, among young people in particular, if the old-fashioned economic policies advocated by the conservative Mrs Koryagina were adopted.



Pugo: took his life after coup attempt failed

Red flag flies high in rich Bologna

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN BOLOGNA

ACTIVISTS of the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS), formerly the Italian Communist party, plotted election strategy yesterday at their headquarters in a 17th-century palazzo, in offices decorated with posters showing Emiliano peasants being evicted from their homes.

The stills from the Bernardo Bertolucci film 1900 were a reminder that Emilia Romagna was once one of the poorest regions in Italy. Today it is among the wealthiest. Flourishing agriculture and small industry have hardly been touched by the recession. Tourism on the coast has received a welcome boost from visitors steering clear of the war in Yugoslavia.

Bologna shops, nestled around the city's two medieval towers, are packed with Parma ham, and with Parmesan cheese and sparkling Lambrusco wine. Citizens in the "red belt" of Italy now enjoy some of the highest incomes per head in the country, and can afford to savour the joy of being the culinary capital of the nation.

In spite of the new prosperity, a change of name and a rift with hardcore marxists, leaders of the party believe that most former Communist voters, content with showcase left-wing governments in the region, will remain loyal in next month's general election. "Nobody is perfect," Remo Imbeni, the mayor of Bologna, said. "But looking at the rest of Italy, any other form of government for Bologna would be worse. The political picture here will not change."

The Italian Communist party (PCI) became the Democratic Party of the Left in February last year. Some romantics found the rupture with 70 years of class struggle unbearable and formed a breakaway party, the Communist Refoundation. In pragmatic Bologna, where the local party was the first to denounce events in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Afghanistan, 85 per cent of the former Communists supported the change. "We have never been ideological here," Signor Imbeni said.

He is the fourth in an un-

VOTA PDS



Revolutionary roots: a Democratic Left poster

broken line of Communist mayors who have ruled Bologna, together with Socialist and Social Democrat councillors, since 1945. Such stability contrasts starkly with the 50 national governments. The election in Emilia Romagna is seen as a key to the future of the new party. Achille Occhetto, the party's earnest secretary, wants it to become a rallying point for a new reformist left. But critics say the PDS has yet to define a clear identity: seeking to become all things to all men by embracing support for market economy and ecology.

The rival Socialist party hopes it is doomed. "If the PDS received a bad knock here, it would have national repercussions," said Giancarlo Perciaccante, a journalist covering the Bologna campaign for the party daily, L'Unità. "Bologna is a symbol." The PDS inherited the newspaper and the elegant Bologna building for its offices from the PCI.

At the last election, in 1987, the Communists were the largest party in Bologna with 42 per cent, and in Emilia Romagna with 47 per cent, compared to their national showing of 26 per cent. Davide Visani, the PDS national organiser, is braced for some losses to the Communist Refoundation, which has won a legal battle to use the hammer-and-sickle as its electoral symbol. The PDS has adopted an oak.



Tiger tamers: two Siberian hunters subduing a wild tiger with bare hands in the taiga near Russia's Far Eastern city of Khabarovsk. The men are among the few hunters who still catch tigers without weapons

Serbs split Bosnian republic

FROM DESSA TREVISAN AND TOM JUDAH IN BELGRADE

A YUGOSLAV air force jet fired rockets at a factory in the northern Bosnian town of Bosanski Brod, police in Croatia reported, as Serbs announced the constitution of their own republic in Bosnia-Herzegovina yesterday.

Armed clashes and shooting incidents threatened to destroy hopes that a Bosnian civil war could be avoided. In a ceremony in Sarajevo, local Serb leaders said they were "laying the foundations of a fourth Serbian state in Yugoslavia". The declaration came as Muslims and Croats on the Bosnian presidency sent a message to the United Nations appealing for military observers to help bring calm to the republic and accused Serbs of terrorism.

Yesterday Bosnia sent three leaders to checks reports that civilians had been killed in continuing fighting in Bosanski Brod. Three people were injured by an explosion in a cafe in Mostar and Serbs accused Croats and Muslims of killing ten civilians.

Belgrade: The Serb-led Yugoslav army has completed its withdrawal from Macedonia. Tanjug news agency reported yesterday it said army representatives and Macedonian officials met on Thursday to mark the end of the pull-out, agreed after the republic declared independence from Yugoslavia last year. General Milorad Mojsilovic, of the Yugoslav army, said the withdrawal had been carried out "successfully and without any serious incidents". (Reuters)

Mitterrand's willing devotee queues up for Cresson's job

FROM PHILIP JACOBSON IN PARIS

JACK LANG'S unabashed worship of President Mitterrand is a standing joke in French politics, especially among rivals and critics in the ruling Socialist party, but the minister of culture might still have the last laugh.

In the past few days, as the government has struggled to come to terms with its humiliation in last Sunday's regional elections, M. Lang, who doubles as spokesman for the Elysée Palace, has manoeuvred his name on to the list of potential replacements, should Edith Cresson be dropped as prime minister.

That he finds himself mentioned in the same breath as most of his cabinet colleagues, he won a handsome personal vote in the regional poll in his Loire valley fiefdom. It is certainly no coincidence that M. Lang has been popping up with even greater regularity on television since the regional polls.

According to the Socialists' self-styled "professionals", M. Lang is too much of a lightweight for the prime ministerial job. His numerous enemies within the party machine point gleefully to the widespread ridicule he attracted recently when decorating Sylvester Stallone for outstanding services to arts and letters.

While M. Lang continues to make mischief, Mme Cresson appears to be mustering her forces for a determined attempt to persuade M. Mitterrand to keep her on at the head of a significantly restuffed government. Sources close to the prime minister are busily leaking suggestions that she has repeatedly asked the Elysée to be allowed to jettison some of her cabinet in favour of well-qualified people outside politics and representatives of France's increasingly popular environmental movement.

As it happens, one of her present ministers, Brice Lalonde, head of the Generation Ecology faction that did unexpectedly well in the regional contest, is now in deep trouble with the Socialists. Always unpredictable, the environment minister reacted to the result by declaring that he was not interested in any "union with the left".

Exiles worsen plight of Berlin homeless

FROM IAN MURRAY IN BONN

BERLIN police arrested a drunken and desperate young woman as she tried to blow up a petrol station this week. She had just been evicted from her flat.

Her plight spotlights the fact that Berlin is short of at least 100,000 homes, with more and more people needing to live there because the German government is to move out of Bonn. The housing shortage is by no means confined to Berlin. Across the country it is being exacerbated by the influx of ethnic Germans from the former Soviet empire and by the arrival of more than 1,000 people a day seeking asylum. At least 400,000 refugees are expected this year. Accommodating them is soaking up the cheaper property. The federal tenants' organisation calculates that there is now a shortfall of at least 2.5 million homes in Germany. The pressure is forcing rents up. A tenant in the west must now expect to pay a monthly rent of DM8 a square metre (£3 a square yard) for an unheated apartment about 15 per cent more than before unification two years ago.

In the east, the phasing out of subsidies means that the percentage increase has been even steeper. By the time higher heating and service charges are added, the east German has to pay four times as much for accommodation now as before unification.

Aeroflot airliner damaged by missile

Moscow: An Azerbaijani missile damaged an Aeroflot passenger plane flying from the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh to the Armenian capital of Yerevan yesterday, but the pilot landed safely, Armenian officials here said.

According to Mikit Kazaryan, a spokesman for the Armenian mission in Moscow, a Yak 40 Aeroflot jet with 30 passengers and four crew on board was hit by a heat-seeking missile over the Gelbadzhar region soon after taking off from Stepanakert. The missile did not explode, but damaged an engine on the plane's tail. The pilot was able to shut the engine down and land safely in Yerevan on two engines.

The attack came as the two former Soviet republics agreed to extend a precarious ceasefire in the disputed enclave until peace talks could start. (AP)

Turkey blames media reports

Istanbul: Suleyman Demirel, the Turkish prime minister, said Bonn's decision to suspend all arms shipments to Turkey was based on a "misunderstanding" that German-supplied arms had been used to quell Kurdish demonstrators in southeast Turkey (Andrew Finkel writes). A statement said the German action was based on wrong and misleading press reports.

In Bonn Dieter Vogel, the government spokesman, said Germany intended to maintain its embargo on arms deliveries to Turkey.

Looking west

Paris: Ukraine sees little future for itself within the Commonwealth of Independent States and is basing its hopes on eventually joining the European Community. Lionel Stoleru, an economic adviser to Ukraine, said here. (AFP)

City blocked

Bucharest: As the ruling National Salvation Front opened a three-day congress here, several thousand protesters blocked the city to demand the return of Moldavia, which Romania lost to the Soviet Union in 1940 when Stalin annexed it. (Reuters)

Siren sounded

Paris: Greenpeace sounded a nuclear warning siren and unfurled a banner at the Arc de Triomphe after its activists were prevented by the French navy from setting up a "peace camp" at the Mururoa atoll nuclear testing site in the Pacific. (Reuters)

Maltese elected

Valletta: Malta's opposition Labour party has elected Alfred Sant, an economist, aged 43, as its leader after losing last month's elections to the Nationalists. A graduate of Boston and Harvard universities, he succeeds Karmenu Mifsud Bonnici. (Reuters)

Condom barred

Montreal: The Canadian affiliate of McDonald's has obtained a court order blocking a sex shop from selling McDonalds, claiming that it was using its proprietary "Mc" prefix. The firm must now destroy all its unsold McDonalds. (Reuters)

Cossacks sign up as mercenaries in new wars of conquest

THE Cossacks of the Don are hiring themselves out to fight in battles far from their homeland.

In Moldova, Don Cossacks are reported to be paid up to 5,000 roubles (£300) a month to defend the Russian-populated Dnestri mini-republic against the majority Romanian-speaking Moldavians. And in the north Caucasus, Don Cossack patrols are checking vehicles on their way to the rebellious Chechen region, searching for weapons and, allegedly, looting some.

The Terek Cossacks, for their part, do not have to travel hundreds of miles to fight Russia's border wars. The Chechen insurgents seeking independence from Russia are on their doorstep. Grozny, the Chechen capital, was founded in 1824 as an outpost of the Terek Cossack line against the Chechens and other Caucasus Muslim nations.

Four decades earlier, the grandly-named town of Vladikavkaz, or Lord of the Caucasus, had been founded as the headquarters of

The Cossacks, the sword arm of the tsars, are trying to resume their role as defenders of the realm, writes Anatol Lieven from Vladikavkaz

the Cossack line. It had taken the Russian empire and the Cossacks all those decades to push that much further into Chechen territory. Today, the descendants of the Chechens are determined to push that line back again — and the descendants of the Cossacks are just as determined not to be pushed back.

At a meeting in Vladikavkaz last month, the Cossacks voted to revive their old imperial military name, the Terek Cossack Host. A majority of speakers called on President Yeltsin to give them arms to defend the Russian minority in Chechnia.

After a letter was read out detailing alleged Chechen oppression of Russians, one of the Cossack leaders declared to shouts of approval: "War will begin in late spring or early summer. We

must prepare for it. No one else will help us." Meanwhile, the Kuban Cossacks have demanded the separation of their territory from the north Caucasian Muslim republics, and the Cossacks of the Urals and of the Semirechye have demanded separation from Kazakhstan.

The meeting in Vladikavkaz was quaintly pre-revolutionary. Not just the splendid uniforms, but the moustached faces, too, seemed to come straight from one of those photograph albums of imperial Russia under Tsar Nicholas II. In Moscow and St Petersburg, Russian burrah-patriots who dress up in these old uniforms usually look ridiculous.

In the Caucasus, no-one is laughing. The Cossacks here wear their uniforms with the air of men who feel at ease

in them, and that is also how they handle their automatic weapons. Cossack weapons and organisation are generally thought to come from Russian hardliners in the former Soviet armed forces.

The entire leadership of the Terek Cossacks is made up of serving or retired officers: the orchestrators of the proceedings at the Terek meeting were a huge plain-clothes colonel from an unidentified branch of the army, and a tough, small officer in battledress from the special forces.

Rightly or wrongly, the Cossacks regard themselves not as immigrants, but as a Caucasian ethnic group with roots going back hundreds of years. They have, in fact, become thoroughly mixed with the Caucasian nations. This was apparent from the racially disparate faces at the meeting. The uniforms and hats of the Cossacks were taken straight from their Caucasian adversaries.

The Cossacks also see themselves as an oppressed people, ferociously persecuted under Lenin and Stalin



Soldiers of fortune: Cossacks with their mounts in the prewar Soviet Union

for having sided with the Whites in the Russian Civil War. As a result of the defeat of the Whites, some areas conquered by the Cossacks under the tsarist empire were returned to their Caucasian adversaries. In such disputed regions, all

over the north Caucasus, populations are squaring up to each other in ways which still fall short of war, but which could be heading in that direction.

A typical incident took place last year in the Sunzhensk district of Che-

cheno-Ingushetia. The local Cossack ataman, or headman, and four others were killed in what the Cossacks called an organised "pogrom" by the Ingush.

The latter say that the fight started when the ataman got drunk and relieved

himself in front of their womenfolk. Incidents like this are the sparks flying around in the north Caucasian powder-keg.

Major Vassili Konyakhin, the ataman of the Terek Cossacks, is bitterly opposed to Chechen independence but also opposes the demands of the Cossack radicals for an immediate armed Cossack paramilitary movement.

As a first step, he wants the restoration of lands and rights taken from the Cossacks, local autonomy and the creation of Cossack regiments within the Russian army.

The prestige of this second world war fighter pilot comes from the medal on his chest — Hero of the Soviet Union. This did not, however, prevent him from being booed when he said that the Cossacks were not yet ready to take up arms.

But if fighting does break out, the Cossacks will not lack for training or leaders. The rows of hard-faced officers at the meeting in Vladikavkaz made that all too clear.

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Clinton rattled by a 20th-century George Washington



Washington: attacked where enemy was weak

JERRY Brown was exhausted, Bill Clinton was recovering from an explosive attack of rage, and only President Bush seemed in any comfort — and he was resting after a five-hour thyroid examination. All in all, the New York primary campaign yesterday resembled a parade of the near-dead.

Governor Clinton, whose calm in the face of persistent personal attacks has impressed even his enemies, lost his temper on Thursday night when an Aids activist used the phrase "dying of ambition" to contrast the candidate's condition with his own. These three words somehow snapped the governor's self-control.

A crowd of New York lawyers, who had paid up to \$250 (£145) to hear their choice for president at a midtown Manhattan restaurant, then heard

Jerry Brown, just as tired as his rival, was the only real winner when Bill Clinton blew his top at an Aids victim, Peter Stothard writes from New York

a performance for which the White House might have paid a million. Mr Clinton shouted that he was "sick and tired" of the abuse heaped upon him. He called the press "snotty-nosed" and the charges against him "crap", and said that if he were truly dying of ambition he would not be in the same room as his tormentor.

At first his supporters cheered. But, as the governor's strangled voice ranted on for more than ten minutes, their mood changed to one of worry and wondering.

Officials from the Bush-Quayle campaign in Wash-

ington immediately cited the incident as proof that the Democratic front-runner for his party's nomination was unfit for the White House. "The American people do not want a president who loses his cool under pressure," one said. The news of Mr Clinton's outburst came conveniently on the day Mr Bush's doctor said that the president needed less stress, a lighter schedule and more holidays.

Governor Clinton's supporters tried to turn the clash to their advantage, suggesting that the voters of New York had a long tradition of liking "fresh-and-blood can-

didates" who could give critics as good as they got. But the immediate winner was Jerry Brown, the former governor of California, who won proof that his guerrilla assault on his rival was drawing blood.

Mr Brown has become the latest of New York's instant stars. His campaign was even compared by one observer yesterday to that of George Washington against the British, "attacking where the enemy is weak, retreating where the enemy is strong, and travelling light". Snowy New Hampshire, where Mr Brown was ignored and overwhelmed in February, was his Valley Forge. Connecticut, where he won a surprise victory on Tuesday, was his Saratoga. Now, would his Yorktown be New York?

The primary is still almost two weeks away. As Governor

Clinton's aides continually have to say to themselves, their lead in delegates is more than seven-to-one. Under the system of proportional allocation, their candidate would be arithmetically vulnerable now only if he stopped winning any votes at all.

But Mr Clinton will not stop winning votes as long as he stays in the war. That is why Mr Brown, temporarily backed by the baying New York media, has only one strategy — to force a final retreat and surrender.

Yesterday *The New York Times* reported how, in 1988, Governor Clinton exempted himself from the conflict-of-interest provisions of a state ethics law. The deletion of the provision, which would have covered his wife Hillary's legal work for the state government, took place during a private drafting session at

tended by Mr Clinton and one of Mrs Clinton's partners, the newspaper claimed.

Governor Clinton, pursuing his policy of never allowing an accusation to remain unanswered, responded by saying that the provision was deleted after a tougher bill which he had written was held up by the legislature. "It is inherently unreasonable to believe that, if I were trying to exempt myself, I would have introduced the idea in the first place," he said.

For Mr Brown, the issue is the latest in what he calls, at every campaign stop, the "scandal a week" syndrome. For him it is critical that he keeps the spotlight on the unelectability of Mr Clinton rather than, for example, on his own "simple flat-rate 13 per cent income tax".

This was good as a surprise tactic in Colorado and Con-

necticut, where electors were struggling with tax-returns and nobody bothered to work out what it meant. In New York it is not so good. Here Democratic taxation gurus, such as Senator Daniel Moynihan, have shown convincingly that "Brownism" only makes the rich richer and the poor poorer.

Mr Brown is as tired as Mr Clinton. He cancelled events on Thursday because "he hasn't been eating, he hasn't been sleeping, and he's losing his voice", an aide said. He has, however, been winning. He is flushed by attention and success. He is said to relish the comparison with George Washington: as one of his New York workers pointed out yesterday, among the defeated commanders in the pivotal Saratoga campaign of 1777 was one Sir Henry Clinton.

US accuses Tripoli of abusing UN

FROM GEORGE BROCK IN THE HAGUE

LIBYA was using the International Court of Justice to shield itself from Western outrage over its refusal to surrender two men suspected of the Lockerbie bombing, America's lawyers told the judges yesterday.

The court yesterday completed the first round of hearings into a request from Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan leader, that it should prevent any moves to apply United Nations sanctions against his country. The Libyans argue that America and Britain have breached the Montreal Convention on air terrorism by their moves in the UN Security Council to force Libya to give up the two men for trial. Britain and America contend that the convention does not apply to states that sponsor terrorists.

The 16 judges will sit again today and may issue their ruling within weeks. But a full judgment on the main case brought by Libya may take up to two years.

Edwin Williamson, the American State Department's legal adviser, told the court that Libya's case was an attempt to avoid the consequences of years of supporting terrorism by setting two parts of the UN system, the security council and the court, against each other. The case was, he said, "the first

example in the history of the court of a state trying to use the court to undo the work of the security council."

The bomb attacks on Pan Am Flight 103 and a French UTA flight destroyed in 1989 were "blatant and obscene violations" of international law. "I am sure you can understand the outrage of the United States and, I am certain, of the 32 other states whose nationals were murdered, and at the thought of Libya trying to use the court to shield itself from international condemnation," Mr Williamson said.

But Libya's sudden tactical lurch towards legal action in the UN's own court, has forced America into a switch of its own. American diplomacy towards Libya over Lockerbie has combined hints of military action with working for a consensus in the security council. Yesterday, the State Department's quartet of lawyers laid emphasis exclusively on peaceful diplomacy inside the United Nations. They did not sound convincing.

On Thursday, Ian Brownlie, QC, professor of international law at Oxford University and one of Libya's counsel, had plausibly described a remark made by Vice-President Quayle as a cold-blooded hint that the 1986 American bombing of Tripoli could be repeated.

Descriptions of the last moments of Flight 103 on December 21 1988, also still have the power to chill the blood even if the statistics are now dreadfully familiar. Legal documents may describe the deaths of 270 people as an "aerial incident" but the court was hushed as Alan Rodger, QC, the Scottish solicitor-general, recounted the moment when the plane disintegrated and fell out of the winter sky.



Gaddafi: wants court to prevent sanctions

Graham to preach in Pyongyang

Billy Graham, the American evangelist, said yesterday that he will preach a message of peace and reconciliation to one of the world's last Stalinist nations when he visits North Korea next week. The Baptist, aged 73, said he had no idea why the communist government in Pyongyang had approved his trip.

Graham will preach at Protestant and Catholic churches and give a lecture at Kim Il Sung University. He said he wanted to show North Koreans that "Americans can be friendly".

Graham Bickley, who starred in the television comedy *Bread and Dave Willets*, of *The Phantom of the Opera*, are to take over lead roles in the hit musical *Les Misérables* at the Palace Theatre, London, from April 27.

Lord Callaghan, the former Labour prime minister, will receive an honorary fellowship from University College, Swansea, today to mark his 80th birthday. Lord Callaghan, president of the college since 1986, was a Cardiff MP for 42 years until he stood down in 1987.

The Prince of Wales was applauded by onlookers as he visited the Keats-Shelley museum in Rome at the start of a private visit to Italy. His visit is part of the celebrations marking the bicentenary of Shelley's birth.

Muhammad Ali, the former world heavyweight boxing champion, and Mike Utley, the Detroit Lions football player who was paralysed last year, will today talk to about 800 young American Indians about the importance of self-esteem, at the annual Native American Youth Weekend.



Rock of faith: Palestinian girls praying yesterday on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Behind them is Islam's holy shrine, the Dome of the Rock, where police estimated up to 200,000 Arabs turned up to worship the previous Friday during the month of Ramadan

America braced for wave of executions

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

STATE governments across America are re-equipping their gas chambers and electric chairs to deal with a surge in the number of death row prisoners who are reaching the end of their tortuous appeals.

California, with more than 300 condemned men in its jails, is due to perform its first execution for a quarter of a century on April 21. Arizona will carry out its first official killing in 29 years on April 6. Delaware recently executed its first prisoner for 46 years.

The United States Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in America in 1976. But only 166 men and one woman have been executed since then, most in half a dozen Southern states. With more than 2,500 men and women on death row, however, the pace of executions is increasing as prisoners exhaust their appeals.

Ten men were executed in the first three months of this year, compared with 14 in the whole of last year. Experts say there could soon be dozens of executions a year as states try to eliminate the backlog.

"The American public wants it. They're fed up with the criminals getting away with murder and they want to

see them pay," said Ernie Preate, Pennsylvania's attorney-general.

The death penalty is in force in 36 states but only 18 have used it since the 1976 supreme court ruling. Three-quarters of the executions were in the South — Texas, Florida, Louisiana, Georgia, Virginia and Alabama.

California, however, is now the focus of attention. After 13 years on death row, during which he has had his execution postponed five times, Robert Alton Harris is due to go to his death on April 21 for the murder of two teenage boys.

Pete Wilson, the governor of California, has said he will grant Harris a hearing on clemency, even though he is not obliged to. But the governor's move seems geared more to preparing America's biggest state for the shock of a resumption of executions than to relieving Harris.

Even if the governor does decide to grant Harris clemency, the approval of at least four members of the state's highest court would be needed to cancel the execution. But the court is now dominated by judges appointed by the Republicans and favourable to capital punishment.

Rail strike bewilders Japanese

FROM JOANNA PTMAN IN TOKYO

A RUSH-HOUR railway strike affected six million Japanese commuters yesterday and caused amazement in Tokyo and other cities where harmonious industrial relations are taken for granted.

Japanese unions generally steer clear of industrial action, politely confining their occasional ritual demonstrations to lunch-breaks when, having notified the management, they don red headbands and shout slogans in an orderly fashion.

But yesterday members of the general federation of private railway and bus workers' unions cancelled morning rush-hour trains for almost six hours, while their leaders negotiated with the management over the annual wage increase.

By 10.20am Japan's first big strike for 11 years was over. The federation had retreated from its demand for a monthly wage increase of over 16,000 yen (£70) and accepted the management's offer of 15,700 yen.

Dhaka fears rise as Burmese stay put

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN COX'S BAZAR

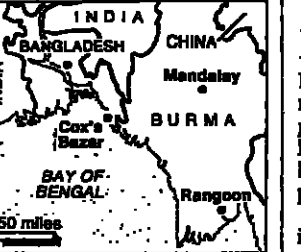
TEN bamboo towns are growing up amid the rice paddies of southern Bangladesh. Tailors have unpacked sewing machines, shopkeepers are setting up stalls and an air of permanence is taking hold. The Dhaka government's fears are coming true.

Nearly 200,000 Burmese Muslims, known as Rohingyas, have so far fled into Bangladesh to escape rape, forced labour and beatings. Most days about 6,000 more arrive. At least 100,000 people are living in the open. Relief agencies are hurrying to erect enough shelters before the monsoon arrives.

There is a sense of relief, almost joy, among the Rohingyas at making it this far. Most were subsistence farmers in Burma's Arakan province. Few want to go home, despite Bangladesh's insistence that they cannot stay permanently. They feel at home here: their language, a mixture of Bengali, Arabic, Burmese and the Chittagong dialect, is much the same as the local rural tongue. During British times, farm labourers from what is now Bangladesh worked in Arakan during the harvesting season and large numbers settled permanently.

Bangladesh says there were 2.2 million inhabitants of Arakan, 1.4 million of whom were Rohingyas. Burma regards them as ethnically non-Burmese and is using thousands for forced labour to build runways and other military facilities in Arakan.

Awmar ul Islam, a political leader in the Bangladesh border area, said the Rohingyas were his brothers. "We are Chittagonians, they are Rohingyas: there is no difference. We have interacted for centuries. But they are Burmese and we are Bangladeshi. They must go back." But the Rohingyas show every determination to stay. "I do not want to return," says Ahsa Karun, aged 30, who has just arrived with her eight children. "I was raped by soldiers. So was my daughter. We have left our land for good."



US to buy Russian space reactor

Washington: In an abrupt easing of Cold War trade restrictions, the Bush administration announced yesterday that it had authorised the purchase of \$14 million (£8 million) in space technology and nuclear fuel from Russia (Martin Fletcher writes).

The decision will allow the Pentagon to buy the Topaz space reactor and four Hall thrusters for manoeuvring space vehicles, while the energy department will buy plutonium 238 for space power supply. Until now the White House had opposed purchases that could prop up the military-industrial complex of the former Soviet Union and delay its conversion to civilian uses. That policy was opposed by various government departments, Nasa and scientific institutions eager to buy Soviet technology at bargain prices.

Tyson fights on

Washington: Lawyers for Mike Tyson, sentenced to six years' jail for rape, were returning to court yesterday to contest a judge's ruling that the former heavyweight boxing champion should not be freed on bail pending his appeal against conviction.

Warrant issued

Delhi: The chief judicial magistrate of Bhopal has ordered that a warrant of arrest be issued to initiate extradition proceedings against Warren Anderson, who was chairman of Union Carbide at the time of the Bhopal disaster in 1984.

Hanging halted

Johannesburg: South Africa has reversed its widely criticised decision, announced earlier this week, not to delay the execution of prisoners sentenced to death. Hanging has now been stopped while constitutional talks are in progress. (AFP)

Rebels attack

Nairobi: Rwandan rebels claimed in a statement released in Kampala that they killed more than 300 government troops in Ngarara district near the Uganda border. Radio Rwanda said the rebels forced 7,000 people to flee their homes.

Mercy denied

Peking: Wei Jingsheng, China's longest-serving political prisoner who was jailed for leaking state secrets, will not be released before he completes his 15-year sentence in 1994 because of "poor behaviour". Cai Cheng, the justice minister, said. (AFP)

Iron man dies

Sydney: Lang Hancock, who discovered some of the world's largest iron ore reserves in Pilbara in Western Australia, in 1952, has died at the age of 82. His fortune of about £38 million has been contested by his daughter and his third wife. (Reuters)

Women helped

Peking: Decades after Mao declared that "women hold up half the sky", China has unveiled a new bill to counter sexual discrimination at work, in the home, at school and in the law courts. The bill is expected to become law on October 1. (Reuters)

Sushi strikes

Tokyo: Three Japanese gourmets were critically ill after eating blowfish at a fashionable sushi bar in Nagasaki. Part of the fish's attraction for gourmets seems to be flirring with death if any part of its highly poisonous liver and ovaries are eaten. (Reuters)

Argentine veterans would fight again for Falklands

ARGENTINE war veterans will largely remember April 2, 1982, as the day they arrived on the Falkland Islands as an invasion force during harsh weather with inadequate equipment — and were led into a war by a military junta, one many thought they could win.

Nevertheless, they plan to commemorate the day in nationwide ceremonies under the Argentine flag, and to walk in processions with banners declaring: "The Malvinas are Argentine." The Malvinas, as they call the South Atlantic islands, will be theirs eventually, says a patriotic song which the children of dead soldiers are practising. Some of the veterans' banners claim: "We will return."

More than three-quarters of those sent to the Falklands were conscripts aged between 18 and 20. A disproportionate number came from the

poorer provinces of northern Argentina. Jorge Portal was a conscript aged 18 and says he was given a weapon he did not know how to use. He claims he had no idea where he was going, and when confronted with battle he could not endure the cold and hunger.

"We were put on a Hercules plane at the southern city of Comodoro Rivadavia and were not certain what we were heading for. I remember we did some training, but I only learnt how to use the weapon I was given once I was on the battlefield."

After one encounter with British marines, who arrived on the islands in May, he was shot in the leg and had to scramble away from the trenches to a hospital in Port Stanley. He said there were no facilities and medicines in the hospital to take care of his wounded leg until British sol-

ten years on, the bitter conscripts of the Falklands war resent being regarded by the government as a bad memory, writes Gabriella Gamini in Buenos Aires

diers recaptured Port Stanley. Jorge Portal was just one of thousands of conscripts sent to the Falklands unprepared. "Our uniforms let in all the cold. At night we used to have to hang our drenched trousers and shirts and sleep naked all huddled together to keep from freezing," he recalls. Ten years on, he is one of 10,000 veterans still campaigning for meagre pensions and compensation. Only 5,000 of them receive a monthly sum of £70 while the rest have been left waiting.

Luis Ibañez, president of a commission for war veterans, who was also conscripted and claims to have fought in the

battle for Goose Green, says he was then forced to surrender because his legs froze. "A small proportion of conscripts have received some attention from the government. The war had to be forgotten about, so we had to be put aside as a bad memory," he said.

"Only a few weeks ago the government promised it would start a countryside medical programme to give physical and psychological check-ups to soldiers who fought in the war. It has taken ten years to see if we are all well," he said.

The government of President Menem has promised to

launch a preferential scheme for cheaper mortgages for the veterans, and their families. One international aid worker said: "Some of the soldiers came back not just physically affected but mostly mentally affected, and that was never looked at here."

Some of the families of the 700 Argentine soldiers killed in the conflict will also join in commemoration marches. They say they have to have a good memory of their loved ones. Elena González de Sosa, aged 51, the mother of Miguel Angel, who died when the General Belgrano was sunk on May 2, said: "We want to remember them as heroes who fought for something."

However, some families harbour bitter memories. "We never heard of my brother's death until two weeks after the conflict ended, then we just got a letter saying he

had fallen. The circumstances were never explained. And we are still waiting to find out," said Jorge Raúl Medina, aged 28.

"Information was all very uncertain on this side. We were never told the truth. The TV kept saying we had won. And then we were suddenly confronted with long lists of dead after the war. It was a shock," said Señor Medina.

Señor Portal said: "This war is the only thing we are remembered for and we have to maintain our pride, despite the way we were treated."

Most conscripts say they would fight again, though 85 per cent did not stay in the army after the conflict. Señor Ibañez said: "I am prepared to go to war again to get the Malvinas back, but I would demand that the soldiers get a better deal."

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Clifford Longley

Market forces too often clash with social justice

The late Friedrich von Hayek derided "social justice". It was a term, he said, which ought to be driven from the English language. Nor did he believe in God. Perhaps there was a connection.

The opening entry under Justice in Karl Rahner's classic *Encyclopedia of Theology* is strikingly headed: "The social sense of justice in the Old Testament". What is clear from both the Old and the New Testament traditions is that justice as administered in the courts, the forensic kind, is only an Aristotelian subset of a much wider justice which permeates the Judeo-Christian system. There is really no such thing, in that system, as justice which is not social.

So the concept of social justice which Hayek rejected is up to 4,000 years old, probably as old as monotheism itself. Such a tradition constantly develops, and a definition is hard to pin down, but it involves, at least, a concept of obligation towards those in need who are not protected by the mutual duties of family life. The obligations of social justice precede such laws as are enacted by societies. They are, so to speak, among the higher obligations imposed by God, binding irrespective of temporal law.

In the case of extreme necessity, social justice says the starving have a right to bread, the diseased to treatment, the naked and homeless to shelter. Those with bread have an obligation to give to those without. Voluntary benevolence on the one hand, gratitude or "deservedness" on the other, do not come into it. If those with bread default on their obligations, the starving may take it (and may even have a duty to take it) and yet will not be morally guilty of stealing. Indeed, society may take the bread (or the means to buy it) by force if necessary, to pass to the poor. The poor have an entitlement, not the hope of a gift if they are lucky or well-behaved.

This assumption was common to Old Testament Israel and medieval tithing, under which a compulsory tax of 10 per cent was paid to the monastic houses to look after the poor. It was also the assumption behind the first Poor Law in 1601, when all those with property became obliged to contribute to parish relief.

The history of the British welfare state shows it to be a clear development from these ancient ideas. It preserves the concept of an obligation to those in need, and of society having an inescapable debt towards them. In the process, however, social justice has become increasingly confused with the pursuit of equality, with "fair shares for all", although that is not implied by the scriptural sources. Indeed, social justice is essentially a code for coping with inequality, and preventing it from having inhumane consequences.

In the Bible, in medieval times and afterwards, inequality was accepted. Sometimes as necessary, sometimes as desirable. The Old Testament Wisdom literature, for example, describes a just man as one who conducts himself so prudently in his dealings with his equals and those below him that he profits by us, while not meaning to glorify poverty, conveys a relaxed acceptance of some economic inequality.

Reproduction of this view began in the late 18th century, when the workings of laissez-faire economics were treated (a little obliquely) by Adam Smith as if they were the consequence of natural law under God's invisible guiding hand, and by Thomas Malthus as the one true version of social justice, even though it was a justice which passed death sentences on the innocent. The struggle to uphold the Christian notion of social justice against such radical political economists, Hayek's forebears, was a long and bitter one. Thousands died, not least in the Irish famine, victims of the belief of their masters that any intervention in the workings of a market was a kind of sacrilege.

With the emergence of the welfare state, the cruel consequences of extreme laissez-faire were finally rejected. Today, the current election debate on the welfare state is being conducted within either the premises of Judeo-Christian social justice, or even, in health care, to the left of that, within what Hayek would call the "socialist" assumptions of egalitarianism.

The liberal economics of Hayek's system are as radically incompatible with this debate as they are with Christianity and Judaism. If social justice has one statement to make to economists, it is that economics is not an autonomous science but one under judgment. It is Judeo-Christian social justice that decides when economics — Hayek's or Marx's or any other — has found the right answer, not vice versa.

Peter Riddell looks back on a week in which neither party has made a decisive breakthrough

The war of Jennifer's ear

RIDDELL ON THE ELECTION

Forget Jennifergate. The furore over Labour's election broadcast will not decide the election, and anyway the story yesterday appeared to be running out of steam. The main impact has been to distract attention from what is really happening in the campaign in the country.

Where do the parties stand? Roughly where they started. Despite fluctuations in some polls, and the odd survey showing a Tory lead, there has been no more than a one point variation in the running average of the major polls. This now puts Labour on nearly 41 per cent, the Tories on just over 39 per cent and the Liberal Democrats on 16 per cent (though they may be slipping). This points to a hung parliament with Labour just the largest single party.

Has anything happened in the campaign? The main event remains John Smith's budget. The Tory lead over Labour on taxation has fallen during the campaign, although I have heard from some canvassers that the Tory message on tax

may be starting to work. It is too early to assess the fallout from Jennifergate. Television pictures of politicians and journalists abusing each other are best summed up by the title of a recent American book on the media's pursuit of presidential candidates, *Feeding Frenzy*. Labour produced the much disputed broadcast, but the Tories were involved in the subsequent media row. So both may suffer, possibly to the benefit of the Liberal Democrats, who have been able to damn each of them. Much depends on how far the affair has obscured or attracted attention to health, which is Labour's best issue by far.

Is the campaign as uninspiring as it seems? Yes, because the parties have little new to say. So many of the issues were exhaustively argued before the election, and the party machines are so

determined to minimise any risk of errors, that the politicians sound stale.

How have the leaders done? John Major has shown his strengths of quiet authority, charm and reasonableness in informal meetings and interviews. But his public speeches have often been flatly delivered and, at news conferences, he has at times talked too much like a dry Treasury man and has been overshadowed by more assertive colleagues with a sharper edge such as Michael Heseltine and Kenneth Clarke.

Neil Kinnock has been fluent and self-confident, though at times somewhat tense, as he has exercised tight self-discipline

over his natural ebullience. Paddy Ashdown has carried most of his party's campaign, avoiding the pitfalls of dual leadership and attracting notice by stressing a rise in education spending.

Who else has done well or badly in the campaign? For the Tories, Mr Heseltine, Mr Clarke and Douglas Hurd as a world-weary headmaster above the partisan battle; for Labour, Mr Smith, as well as the old trooper Roy Hattersley, and Bryan Gould; for the Liberal Democrats, the ever-reasonable Alan Beith. On the other side, William Waldegrave badly mishandled a defensible Tory position on Thursday; Jack Cunningham has at times been as much bruiser as compeer of Labour's news conferences; and Des Wilson has probably been seen and heard too often for his and his party's good.

Have the Tories started to

worry? Yes, and the Tories have tried in recent days both to be more aggressive and more positive about their programme in face of charges that their campaign was too lacklustre and negative. Without the rogue Harris poll on Tuesday showing the Tories ahead, and without Jennifergate, there might already be more criticism of Central Office, and the main strategists, of the kind which was starting to surface yesterday.

What is going to change now? If tomorrow's batch of polls shows a continuing, even increased, Labour lead, attention will shift to the possibility of a Kinnock government. Television programmes are likely to give closer scrutiny to Labour's policies and to Mr Kinnock as a potential prime minister. The Tories will seek to frighten undecided voters back to their

camp by attacking Mr Kinnock's leadership. Labour's tax policies and its economic competence. They also hope that Mr Kinnock will make mistakes when under greater pressure.

Labour hopes to maintain the momentum of its so far successful campaign by returning to health, as well as education, unemployment and its recovery programme. A close finish and talk of a Kinnock government may squeeze Liberal Democrat support, especially in the south-east. But if the media focuses more on the possibility of a hung parliament, the Liberal Democrats may benefit.

Can the Conservatives still win? Twice since the war poll ratings have moved during the campaign sharply back towards the governing party, in 1951 and 1959. The parties are now so close that a small shift could give the Tories the largest number of MPs. But a bigger change is needed for the Tories to win an overall majority. So, prepare for the possibility of a hung parliament and another election later this year.

John Grigg on the difficulties posed by the latest volume of the story of a great newspaper

Twenty-five years ago, *The Times* was embarking on a new period in its history, under a new chief proprietor and a new editor. At the end of 1966, control of the paper passed to the Canadian-born Roy Thomson, and early in the new year William Rees-Mogg was appointed editor. Although Roy Thomson died in 1976, to be succeeded by his son Kenneth, the Thomson/Rees-Mogg regime lasted until 1981, when Rupert Murdoch bought *Times* Newspapers.

This period, 1966-81, will be covered in volume VI of *The Times's* official history, on which I have been working for several years and which will soon be finished. Volume V, written by Iverach McDonald, appeared in time for the 200th anniversary of the paper in 1985. It described William Haley's editorship, but also gave an alternative version of Munich, the war years and the immediate post-war period, already covered in volume IV.

The first four volumes were published anonymously, but it is no secret that they were edited and largely written by the typographer and *Times* character, Stanley Morison. The first came out in 1935, on the paper's 150th anniversary.

Writing the history of an institution has been a new experience for me, so I have found it quite a challenge. Like the earlier periods, mine is full of political, journalistic and human interest, and in one respect it is unique, since it contains the unprecedented trauma of the stoppage of the paper for nearly a year in 1978-9. Management problems have intruded from time to time in other volumes, but have never bulked so large as in this.

The Thomson takeover had the important effect of bringing *The Times* and *The Sunday*

Times under the same ownership and, from 1974, more or less under the same roof. In that year, *The Times* was moved from its home site (though not its original building) at Blackfriars to an unpleasant new building adjoining Thomson House in Gray's Inn Road. The move is now generally felt to have been a disaster, above all in contributing to the labour troubles that led to the stoppage.

Any established institution is, in a sense, a collective personality, and to that extent history of it must have the character of a collective biography. Moreover, since institutions consist, essentially, of human beings, there should, I believe, be a fair amount of individual biography within the collective, so that the main figures at any rate are brought to life. I am always disheartened by books in which even leading figures are introduced only as names, with perhaps a footnote giving a *Who's Who*-style CV. Although selection is necessarily invidious, I have tried to give a flesh-and-blood impression of the people who mattered most on the Thomson *Times*.

I have also given special attention to those features of the paper which have long been the most distinctive, such as the leading articles. Rees-Mogg excelled as a leader-writer, having strong, if changeable views, which he expressed in a highly readable style. In maintaining the standard of leaders, he was helped by a talented supporting cast, most of them inherited from the previous regime. Outstanding among them was Owen Huxley.

One of Rees-Mogg's first acts as editor was to end the anonymity rule as applied to correspondents. But it continued, of course, to apply in the leader column, so that a key figure like Hickey remained virtually unknown outside the office. (Fortu-



On the brink of closure: William Rees-Mogg telling reporters in 1981 that *The Times* will shut unless a buyer is found

nately there is a little book in the *Times* archive which shows the authorship of leaders.) Although, like the rest, Rees-Mogg's editorials were unsigned, he did not otherwise follow the example of his predecessors in shunning publicity, but gave many interviews.

Another distinctive feature of the paper to which I give due attention is the obituary column, which was still without a serious rival during the Thomson period. References to them crop up throughout the book, and I have also discussed the feature in some detail.

There was a blast of protest from family and friends at the obituary, in 1975, of Sir Denis Lawson, in which it was said that he "began his career in the City before the war, when the

standards of financial morality and duty to shareholders were less developed than they are today", and added that he had shown he was "more concerned to turn situations to the advantage of himself" than with his "fiduciary duty". In retrospect, it is the comment on the City that seems the more surprising.

Despite the then recent legalising of sexual relations between consenting adult males, homosexuality remained a taboo subject in obituaries throughout the period, though occasionally the time-honoured formula "he was unmarried" gave way to more elaborate evasiveness. A prize case in point is the obituary of Benjamin Britten, where he is said to have had a "nonpareil sexual partnership" with Peter Pears. They were "artistically

the making of each other, just as socially they proved ideally attuned when they came to share their home at Aldeburgh, a favourite resort of their innumerable friends of both sexes". Perhaps the greatest of all features of *The Times*, to which I hope I have done justice, is the page of Letters to the Editor. In 1971, an American journalist wrote an article about the letters which so impressed Senator Abraham Ribicoff of Connecticut that he had it reprinted in the *Congressional Record*.

During the Thomson period the number of letters received rose steeply, and in one year, 1968 (when Enoch Powell made his Birmingham speech on immigration) it rose by 13,000. The correspondents also became more various, with politi-

cians, the City, Oxbridge, clergy and barristers less predominant than they used to be.

Often the best letters were, as they are still, the shortest. Commenting on a long signed article by Rees-Mogg in 1977 on the subject of productivity, which showed that one Dutch man-hour was the equivalent of two British, a reader in Twyford wrote that this was a "considerable improvement on our performance 300 years ago... Samuel Pepys on February 13, 1665, wrote 'But to see how despicably the Dutch speak of us for our using so many more hands to do anything than they do, they closing a cable with 20 that we use 60 men upon'."

A paper is indeed lucky when it can command such copy, unsolicited and free of charge.



...and moreover

PHILIP HOWARD

Two more attempts to reform the English language and make it fit for the modern world are being launched. This week the Simplified Spelling Society announced "English spelling for the new millennium (sic)", either setting out in exemplary fashion as it means to go on, or committing a mistake with a word that is notoriously easy to misspell. Shortly thereafter, Glossa, a "grammar-free" international language based on Latin and Greek, which people should be able to grasp in an hour, is being introduced with a 6,000-word dictionary. (The Glossa people mean free of accident or inflexions: by definition, no language can be free of grammar, which is merely the way its parts work.) These reformers follow in the deeply trampled footsteps of a noble army of linguistic crusaders who have broken their pens and their heads against the absurdities of English grammar and spelling.

The spellers want to remove the redundancies from English spelling, and to this end are publishing a *Handbook to Cut Spelling*. Orthography is a delicate topic for a publication that vomits as many words as hastily as a daily newspaper, but to quote the reasons of the rationalisers: "harmonizing variations — such as *head/bed* giving *hed* — wud help leazrs and assist rters jerry."

English spelling is an ancient and tangled hedge. Perhaps the only way to untangle it is in this way, as it were with a mechani-

cal flail, instead of by gradual billhook-work down the centuries. But there are grave objections, on which all previous attempts have crashed. You lose something of value by reforming even the dottiest spellings, which are the gnarled trunks that record the history of words, like tree-rings. That otiose and unpronounced "b" in debt is a fascinating record. The word arrived into Middle English from Old French as *deu*, in the approved Cut Spelling form. By the 16th century, pedants (purists) had inserted the "b", to show that the original source of the word was the Latin *debitum*. The unpronounced "b" is an antiquarian signpost, and signals the connection with *debit*, *debutante*, and the rest of the family. It does not always improve the environment to replace a thousand-year-old hedge with tidy barbed wire.

A more formidable argument against re-spelling words is that we are never going to agree on whose pronunciation to match. It may be that *head* is the way they pronounce *head* at Aston University. It is certainly not the way they pronounce *head* in Belfast, Glasgow, or Atlanta, Georgia. English is spoken in thousands of mutually contrasting and sometimes incomprehensible dialects, from the Hip-Speak of the ghettos of Los Angeles to the screeches of Strine. There is no reason why a new spelling should reflect the posh pronunciation of a tiny minority of English-speakers.

Glossa is an even more radical attempt at reform, by introducing a synthetic European language, on which all previous attempts have crashed. You lose something of value by reforming even the dottiest spellings, which are the gnarled trunks that record the history of words, like tree-rings. That otiose and unpronounced "b" in debt is a fascinating record. The word arrived into Middle English from Old French as *deu*, in the approved Cut Spelling form. By the 16th century, pedants (purists) had inserted the "b", to show that the original source of the word was the Latin *debitum*. The unpronounced "b" is an antiquarian signpost, and signals the connection with *debit*, *debutante*, and the rest of the family. It does not always improve the environment to replace a thousand-year-old hedge with tidy barbed wire.

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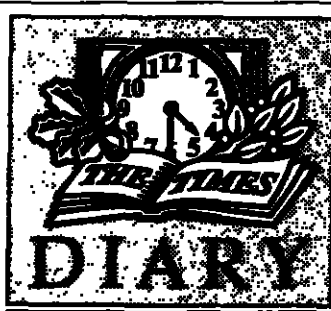
Hall of fame

JULIE HALL'S discomfort this week has increased speculation that if Neil Kinnock wins the election she will not be offered the top Downing Street press job most famously occupied by Bernard Ingham.

Few doubt that Hall would be given a job in Kinnock's Number Ten team, but suggestions were growing yesterday that the Labour leader will ask the advice of Sir Robin Butler, the cabinet secretary, about a suitably qualified civil servant to head his press office — and the name on several lips in Whitehall is Romola Christopherson. Aged 53 and head of information at the department of health for the past six years, Christopherson has retained a strict impartiality which has earned her the respect of all sides.

As prime minister, Kinnock would have the option of appointing a political officer or opting for a career civil servant to handle his press relations. Westminster gossip has long suggested that Hall is not destined for the top press job in government. Another name mooted is Alistair Campbell, political officer of the *Daily Mirror*, but he has always insisted he would not be interested in the job.

Whitehall sources believe that Christopherson, a graduate of St Hugh's College, Oxford, is just the sort of professional heavyweight Kinnock would need. If she were to be offered a job by Kinnock, Christopherson would enjoy the rare distinction of serving the two most bitter political rivals of the past decade. Before moving to health she worked for Mrs Thatcher as Bernard Ingham's deputy for two years, including the Falklands war.



So when the history of the 1992 election is written, how will this past week of campaigning be remembered? Jennifergate, as Peter Riddell calls it? Eargate? Jennifergate? The war of Jennifer's ear, as above? Suggestions, please.

Vicarious pleasures?

THE Archbishop of Canterbury's assertion that the nation spends too much time thinking about sex has been strongly rebutted in at least one rectory. Parishioners of St Margaret's at Haveringham, Norfolk are being urged in the parish newsletter to buy copies of an explicit guide to improving sexual and human relationships called *Making Love*.

The book written by Linda Sonntag, who lives in the village, is accompanied by a video, currently at number two in the best-seller list. The Rev Leslie Hipkins, a middle-aged bachelor who was sent a complimentary copy by Sonntag, says in the newsletter: "This is a book characterised by robust clarity based on reputable research. This volume will become widely used by those interested in human relationships. It demands to be read. Well done, Linda."

Sonntag admits she did not expect an endorsement from such an unlikely quarter. "But Leslie is a

very forward-thinking rector. Encouraged by his response I have sent a copy to Lambeth Palace."

Unlike excuses of which even British Rail has not thought: a pilot on the British Airways shuttle from London to Glasgow announced this week that the flight would be delayed due to "roadworks". Something to do with contractors at Heathrow and a low-flying JCB that had to rumble out of the way before the Boeing 757 could take to the skies.

So when the history of the 1992 election is written, how will this past week of campaigning be remembered? Jennifergate, as Peter Riddell calls it? Eargate? Jennifergate? The war of Jennifer's ear, as above? Suggestions, please.

Brush off

A MOST unlikely player entered the election fray yesterday: *The Lady*. In an interview in the current issue, Norma Major confides: "What I do like doing is taking a room apart and cleaning it. If there is dust around I quite enjoy taking the dust off and washing all the things that need to go back on the clean surface."

Readers of the main editorial page then find that the world's habitual cleaners — of which Mrs Major is a fine example — are given a severe dressing down. "Messy members of society are, by and large, content and relaxed. The 'excuse the mess' brigade are tense, dusty ever at the ready to

flick invisible dust from furniture and carpets." Embarrassed staff at *The Lady* yesterday insisted that no slight was intended. "Pure coincidence," said a member of staff, appalled at the thought that they had unwittingly signed up to Labour's cause.

Pig in a poke?

JAMES PICKLES, the retired high court judge, is planning a new career. Pickles, who hung up his wig last summer, has been invited to make his stage debut in Geoffrey Cuth's *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*. Pickles is not appearing in the initial run at the Diorama in Regent's Park next week, but hopes to accept the offer if and when the play goes on tour. "I'm looking for the right role. This might be it," he says.

Many might agree; he has been asked to play an eccentric judge who in 1386 had a pig dressed in a jacket and breeches and strung up in a Normandy market square for infanticide. But Pickles' transition from gown to greasepaint is not as strange as it may sound. His sister Christina acts in television's *St Elsewhere*, while his daughter Carolyn stars in *The Bill*.

British newspapers are sexist, says a report from *Women in Management in Publishing*. The group, set up by Carmen Callil, Gail Rebeck and other leading women publishers last year, surveyed more than 4,000 book reviews in 17 national newspapers, and describes the findings as "depressing". Less than a quarter of all titles reviewed were by women, while more than three-quarters of all reviewers were men. Worst offenders in *WIMP's* table of bias are the *Financial Times* and *The Independent*. Least sexist, of course, is *The Times*.



THE WILL TO RULE

Tory election campaigns usually hit trouble in mid course. Three times under Margaret Thatcher, the party had to pause, take stock and surge forward afresh. Three times the result was successful, though in no case was the task as tough as it is now. Yet for all the polish of the Labour campaign and for all the clever packaging of its leader, the old maxim cannot be repeated too often: oppositions do not win elections, governments lose them. Nothing Labour can do over the next ten days can guarantee Mr Kinnock the keys to Downing Street. For that to happen, the Tories must, like the broken governor of an exhausted empire, first lose the will to rule.

Some of the shortcomings in the Tory campaign were unavoidable, given the controversial selection of April 9 as the election date. Others are as yet superficial. The campaign was called at the wrong moment, in the aftermath of a responsible but dull Budget. Oppositions are not subject to the same constraints as governments. Having played a sober budgetary innings the Tories duly invited Labour to hit the ball all over the field in John Smith's shadow version. The Tory response to that was negative. It emphasised Labour as the high taxation party, but in a way that made the Tories sound merely like a high income party.

A downmarket advertising campaign was meant to reinforce subliminal working-class worries about Labour as the harbinger of inflation, high taxes and untrustworthiness. A series of knocking posters and television advertisements may yet prove smarter than they appear, but they had about them the harsh ring of the early Thatcher years. Their negative message conflicts with the image of the party's leader, John Major, as a fair-minded and objective statesman. They are reportedly being abandoned.

Meanwhile the party's campaign manager, Chris Patten, has been allowed to vanish to his own marginal constituency of Bath for a few hours most days. The result has been a diminished sense of promotional grip. As the bags under Mr Patten's eyes deepened this week, so did the confusion surrounding the Jennifer Bennett affair. To respond to a Labour dirty trick on hospital waiting lists, not by stressing the government's respectable health record, but by backstage intrigue with a tame Tory newspaper, was the apex of undignified ineptitude. It was certain to focus attention on an issue of known advantage to Labour, drowning any message beneficial to the Tories in a cacophony of media rivalry.

The Tories are as yet unable to come to terms with the change in Labour campaigning since 1987. On most salient issues, notably health, education and unemployment, the Tories are now even further behind Labour than they were in the previous two general elections. The electorate apparently no longer regards either trade unions or defence — both areas where the Tories have a big advantage over Labour — as important. The Tories are strongest in areas of least concern to voters and weakest in areas of their greatest concern.

The party managers therefore decided to avoid campaigning on their own performance. Instead they snatched at fragments of Labour party policy, to blacken them as grim unions-with-socialism. Labour's biggest bugbear was its poor image as a manager of the economy. Yet the Tories have been so mesmerised by the depth of the recession that they have been unable to exploit this advantage. They have come to sound like a party of opposition, consuming precious daily sound-bites by protesting at the evils of Labour's programme. Mr Major speaks too much like a cautious Treasury apologist, forgetting that the homely platitude of a politician is more user-friendly than the dry jargon of an economist. The gulf between the leaden spokesmanship of most members of the cabinet and the Archie Rice performances of Michael Heseltine has become embarrassing.

SAY IT FOR FLOWERS

This is the weekend when the advertising arm of the florists' trade exhorts Britons to say it with flowers for Mother's Day. In less strident tones, the wild flowers give the same message every day of the year, particularly in the imminent month of April, with the daffodils still making the heart dance by Ullswater, violets and primroses pushing up in the ditches, and even cowslips creeping back on the East Anglian headlands, where they had been almost blasted off the face of the clay by the weedkillers of the grain barons.

In their quiet way, wild flowers are a peculiar excellence of the United Kingdom. They make it a green and pleasant land, spotted with pointillist colour. God signed his name in the heavens with shining stars, and on earth with wild flowers. In these cloudy islands, the flowers are usually easier to see than the stars.

But flowers are more than decorations. They are very ancient parts of our landscape and history, as well as records of the passing centuries. For creatures that are by definition and proverbially ephemeral, they have deep roots. Modern oil pipelines across the fields throw up lezards that have lain dormant in the clay for centuries. A Domesday Book for British flowers, *Flora Britannica*, as announced in today's *Weekend Times*, is about to survey the state of our floral heritage, recording where wild plants stand in our culture and society today.

Some of them are ancient English markers. The English unofficial rose goes back heaven knows. We still kiss under the mistletoe, without realising that our custom has folk reasons that may descend from the original and authentic Druids, the wicked twig that killed Balder, and the geographically impossible superstition that Christ's cross was made from its wood. It is not necessary to believe in any of these reasons,

Labour's strategy, so far largely successful, has been to neutralise the negative aspects of its policies, and thus reduce the sticking power of Tory knocking copy. The party has rigorously cast off its old election incubus of trade union corporatism and unreliability on defence. It has plugged health, education and unemployment and goaded the Tories into reaction. Apart from that Labour has sat tight and waited for the Conservatives to lose heart or make mistakes.

The Conservatives must now surely campaign more positively on their achievements in office, even at some risk of focusing on the electorally risky "high saliency" issues. After 15 years of reign, a government must be able to field a coherent defence of its past administration. The Tories' guardianship of British interests in Europe has been creditable. The merits of privatisation, industrial relations reform, higher school standards, shorter hospital waiting lists, contracted-out local services, should all be palpable to the electorate.

There is still time for the Tories to turn their campaign onto a more positive tack. Mrs Thatcher emerged from mid-campaign "wobbles" by seizing the whip, taking a firm grip on the reins and galloping off towards the battleground and victory. This is the example John Major needs to emulate. If his first great electoral test is not to be his last. To win, he must rise above the rough-house antics of his subordinates. He must play down his weaknesses, his nervous rally speeches, his wooden phraseology, the lack of any electrical charge in his appearances. He must find a way of playing to his strengths, his common-or-garden niceness, his appeal as a hardworking and competent manager, his direction of the nation through a delicate period of European history.

The most surprising political phenomenon of the 1980s was the revival of "strong government conservatism" in many Western democracies, after decades of leadership based on consensus. The two prime exemplars, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, won election after election despite fierce antagonism from their opponents. Their political stance was radical, far more so than that of the political left, since it rejected the dominant welfare ethos of post-war government. It sought, or at least said that it sought, to dismantle much of the corporate state and return decision and choice to individuals.

The resulting paradox proved electorally potent. Mrs Thatcher and Mr Reagan condemned modern government, yet both of them gave it a new purpose and direction. They asserted the leadership role of their offices and clothed that role in strong personality. Mrs Thatcher did not pretend to consensus. She never enjoyed a majority of the popular vote in Britain. But she was able to exploit Britain's electoral geography and emerge as a confident winner, giving the Toryism of the 1980s a remarkable ideological thrust.

Mr Major has eschewed that thrust in a studied return to the politics of the centre. The result was electorally sensible, but it drew from the party much of the political excitement that "strong government conservatism" gave his predecessor. He will now have to galvanise his campaign by projecting personal qualities above and beyond those of his colleagues. He must demonstrate what John Keegan in his book on generalship says is the first duty of leadership, gaiety. He must appeal to the voyeurism of democratic elections. Voters expect from their leaders sudden glimpses of ambitions and foibles: a moment of humiliation, a dashing recovery, a final cry of triumph.

This weekend seems likely to be the moment when one of the closest elections since 1970 is won or lost. Mr Kinnock is showing no sign that he intends to give in. Labour has lost three times, and for Mr Kinnock that is enough. Mr Major has now to find the will to win. He can only find it from within himself.

which are all part of wonderfully mongrel and dotty Britishness, to value the translucent berries as a sign of year turning at its cusp and resurrection. Poppies for blood and remembrance go back long before Flanders fields to ancient Egypt.

Other English wild flowers are relative newcomers. The fig trees by the river Don in Sheffield were introduced by sewage and the steel industry 70 years ago. Now marooned by the decline of steel, they are as much part of Sheffield's industrial history as steam hammers. The fritillaries that will turn Magdalen Meadow purple next month are older ecclesiastical relics than most of the ancient stones of Oxford.

This generation too is inevitably leaving its mark in the wild flowers as well as in the data-banks. The motorways that have carved up the countryside for the Moloch of this century give back, in their verges, strips of wilderness where old wild flowers can bloom. Small animals scratch a living, and hawks hover. The green concern for an environment squeezed by concrete and crowds leads people to buy seeds of wild flowers at garden centres, and scatter them to restore the devastations of concrete.

Wild flowers are self-effacing and taken for granted, flourishing best where there are fewest people. They do not make as dramatic Love-Lies-Bleeding television as people and other animals, because they are inert plants. But they are an enduring register of the passing generations. Now that farming has stepped off the treadmill that was turning southern England into one vast field with no hedges and no woods, there is more room left for wild flowers. Set-aside and subsidy should help. But as spring comes round the flowers are proving once again that they are tougher and more tenacious than they look. They will survive our noisier preoccupations.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Election and the health service: diminishing the issue

From Mr Nicolas Walter

Sir, The current posturing of the politicians and the media have as usual obscured the real situation of the health system, as of the wider social system in this country.

The fact is that we have always had not a two-tier but a three-tier system in health, as in so many other essential services (housing, education, caring, etc.) — a private commercial service for the rich, a public welfare service for the poor, and a mixture in between for the people in between — the first supported by the financial advantages of charity and company law, the second supported by the devotion of the staff and the patience of the patients, and the third supported by the uneasy compromises made by the Labour government in 1948 and adjusted from time to time since 1951.

In the same way there has always been a three-tier structure within the system: well-paid professionals and managers at the top, ill-paid workers at the bottom, and the rest in between. Anyone who has had much to do with the NHS — as I have for more than 40 years — knows that it has always been both extraordinarily inefficient and extraordinarily effective, and also that it has always been possible to get quicker if not better treatment by paying extra for it, or else by knowing how to say the right thing to the right person in the right way.

Argument either about this general bad situation or about particular hard cases is pointless unless it addresses the essential inequality of the system — and of the wider society beyond — and asks what kind of health system we really want in theory and will really support in practice.

Yours etc,
NICOLAS WALTER,
88 Idington High Street, N1.
March 27.

From the Reverend Dr Ian Bradley

Sir, Surely the most depressing aspect of this whole sorry affair is that the catalyst which has finally set the election campaign alight is not a debate over policy, nor even a personality but rather a television commercial.

It is, I suppose, inevitable that in a society where politics like so many other activities has become a matter of image, style and presentation rather than content and substance, the most exciting thing that politicians can find to argue about and journalists to write about is an advertisement.

But it is neither politicians nor journalists who should take the blame for this — the real villains are the advertising executives, public relations persons, image consultants, media managers and managers, that whole shadowy and sinister army who have come to be known for reasons that I have not fully grasped as the spin doctors.

Their techniques of manipulation and management are so successful that what most of us will remember best about this campaign, aside from its mind-numbing boredom and the sickening bickering, will be the fireworks and the elaborate stage sets used for rallies and press conferences. Truly the medium has become the message.

I fear that even *The Times* seems to be conniving in the spin doctors' takeover with so much of your election pages devoted to "media watch" and, today, "advertising". Might we have more reporting of the mood of the communities up and down the country and a little less on the latest triumph of presentation or public relations disaster?

Yours etc,
IAN BRADLEY,
7 Strathkirk High Road,
St Andrews, Fife.
March 27.

From Mr Peter D. Rossdale

Sir, A package marked "urgent medical supplies" addressed to the local medical centre was today delivered in error to my office. In the present climate of debate, was this the fault of the government and, if so, was it due to underfunding of the Post Office or of the National Health Service? Further, would a change in government prevent such an error occurring after April 9?

Yours faithfully,
PETER D. ROSSDALE,
Beaufort Cottage Stables,
High Street,
Newmarket, Suffolk.
March 26.

From Mr C. G. Thorley

Sir, The Labour party's broadcast on health service delays raises a wider question which will remain important when the election is over and the recent incident is forgotten.

We have come to accept programmes "based on fact" in the fields of entertainment and advertising, but are we prepared to accept a blend of fact and fiction in respect of current affairs, where the effect and possibly the purpose is to influence public opinion?

Yours faithfully,
C. G. THORLEY,
Preston House, Corton Denham,
Sherborne, Dorset.
March 26.

From Dr Gwenda Crosby

Sir, Would that I had the funds to make a film of my experiences when trying to get patients admitted and treated at the hospital where I worked during the "winter of discontent".

Yours etc,
GWENDA CROSBY,
15 Pearly Road,
Cardiff, South Glamorgan.
March 25.

Devolution proposals: the need for public involvement

From Professor Sir Alan Peacock, FBA, FRSE

Sir, The issue of devolution of government is being addressed by all major political parties with attention centred in Scotland and Wales. It is a major constitutional issue which simply will not go away, as the late Lord Crowther-Hunt and I predicted in the memorandum of dissent to the Royal Commission on the Constitution (Kilbrandon), published close on 20 years ago.

While I would not put my hand in the fire for several of our "major proposals" today, including some which have been belatedly adopted by those who aspire to govern us, there is an important matter which is not receiving sufficient attention: the extent of public demand for participation in government.

The bedrock of our proposals was uniformity in devolution, both as a matter of principle — equality of political rights — and as the recognition of an important reality — the (then) nationwide demand for it. The attitude survey produced for Kilbrandon, which was virtually ignored by its other members, confirmed this. It concluded:

A major finding is that feelings of regional identification are particularly strong throughout the country. Although they are particularly strong in Wales and Scotland, they are almost equally as marked in the South West and Yorkshire. It therefore seems that the sentiments which exist in Scotland and Wales are not unique.

Is the situation still the same today or, as we are led to believe, does nobody want devolution south of the border or east of Offa's Dyke? I suggest to the media sponsors of pre-election polls that they might adapt their surveys so that we do not have to rely solely on casual empiricism.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN PEACOCK,
146/4 Whitehouse Loan,
Edinburgh 9.
March 20.

From Mr Ian Grist

Sir, Your leader of March 20, "Scotland and Wales", displays yet again a serious underestimation of the effects of the "West Lothian question". You airily dismiss the question of English MPs accepting the right of their Celtic cousins to legislate on English affairs such as school, housing and health, but without reciprocal powers over Welsh and Scottish equivalents.

This English equanimity alone

seems improbable and, indeed, if the Welsh and Scottish assemblies should be wholly or partially funded by Westminster it might be thought improper as well. But what about the case that Welsh and Scottish MPs would be able to interfere in English affairs but, perversely, would be denied the right to control what happened in their own countries? This indeed would pile ideology on irresponsibility. It springs of course from the demand for a federal Britain imposed from above. Such would indeed be a rare or even a unique political animal.

Surely the British people deserve far better considered proposals than those now on offer from the opposition parties before we start tearing up our old and well tried Constitution.

Yours faithfully,
IAN GRIST
(Prospective parliamentary candidate (Conservative) for Cardiff Central).
Conservative campaign centre,
156 Richmond Road, Cardiff.

From Mr Dennis Coward

Sir, The "little Englander" jibes that were so frequently directed at Margaret Thatcher and her supporters are now coming home to roost, as one can see from your leader. If our future is to be at the heart of Europe, it is likely to be the future of a much "littler" England than the Euro-enthusiasts gave us to understand, possibly because they failed to understand it themselves.

With all three of our main political parties accepting (with varying degrees of enthusiasm) the transfer of decision-making, law-making and the allocation of resources to a central EC authority, it should not have come as a surprise to find that Scotland and Wales would want to cut out the middle man. Why accept control from Brussels via Westminster, when the process can be simplified and improved by dealing with Brussels direct?

When Dafydd Wigley, president of Plaid Cymru, says: "The tide of history is fast moving in favour of small nations" (report, March 20) he must be referring to the privileged voting power in the European Parliament, of Luxembourg (with six MEPs to represent only 400,000 people) or Ireland (with 15 MEPs for a population of only three and a half million) compared with only 81 MEPs to cover the interests of the UK's 57 million.

Our consuls are under instructions to visit detained British citizens as quickly as possible. They ensure that the detainees understand their rights, and know how to get legal representation; they take messages for families; and, most importantly of all, they ensure that the prisoner is not suffering any discrimination on account of his or her nationality. If they are not satisfied on this last point, they take the matter up vigorously with the prisoner's behalf.

Finally, they can make representations on behalf of the prisoner if they believe that there has been a serious miscarriage of justice. But they cannot do this until the full legal process has been completed and all possibility of appeals has been exhausted. This stage has not been reached in any of the cases in which Mr Jakobi has so far shown interest.

Yours faithfully,
MARK LENNOX-BOYD,
Foreign & Commonwealth Office,
London SW1A 2AH.
March 26.

Given this uneven allocation of votes — so far removed from the one-person-one-vote concept of democracy — and given the determination of the federalists to divide and then rule from Brussels, it is not impossible that the British will be required to finance the final dissolution of the UK.

Yours faithfully,
DENNIS COWARD,
Hartington,
Burnsall, North Yorkshire.

From Professor S. F. Bush

Sir, You play down Tam Dalyell's posing of the "West Lothian question" by asserting that the Scots have had to put up with "unrepresentative government" since 1707.

It is true that in the last 13 years of Conservative government Scotland has returned a majority of Labour MPs, but so what? In 1974-9 England, with an electorate nine times that of Scotland's, was subject to a Labour government whose majority derived not just from Scottish Labour MPs but from the over-representation of Scotland at Westminster which still persists.

On an electorate basis Scotland was entitled to 59 seats instead of 72 in the 1987 parliament and Wales 32 instead of 38. In any case Scotland has not always been a Labour fiefdom. As recently as the 1950s a majority of Scots seats were Conservative.

The fact is that if there are to be assemblies or parliaments in any or all of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, there will have to be a parliament responsible to the people of England. The simplest (and cheapest) way of achieving this is for MPs representing English constituencies to constitute themselves, for devolved affairs, as an English parliament, which is after all what they originally were.

Yours truly,
S. F. BUSH,
Genvall, Millstone Close,
Poynton, Cheshire.

From Mr Graham Addis

Sir, In view of events in Ukraine concerning the nuclear arsenal and the Black Sea fleet, I am prompted to ask: if Scotland secedes, who will control the Polaris submarine fleet?

Yours faithfully,
GRAHAM ADDIS,
24 Hill Barn Lane,
Worthing, West Sussex.

Independent schools

From Mr Andrew Dunnett

Sir, As a prep school master and as a governor of a state school, I was relieved to read of Jack Straw's "softening policy" over the future of independent schools (report, March 21). However, with the future of independent schools secure for the moment, it is hypocritical to advocate the continued scrapping of assisted places.

The scheme benefits over 30,000 children. It is charitable, it makes a real contribution to local education provision, and it should form the foundation for stronger links between the independent and state sectors.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW DUNNETT,
Flat 4, 11 Prima Road, SW9.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071) 782 5046.

Questions arising in murder case

From Mr Arthur Davidson, QC, and others

Sir, On March 13 a man appeared at Chorley magistrates' court charged with conspiracy to murder. He was remanded in custody.

The press and therefore the public were unaware of the court appearance. It was not until four days later, when he appeared again (report, March 18), that the arrest and the earlier hearing became public knowledge.

There may be a reasonable explanation for this unusual step, but there is a clear public interest in the media reporting the progress of a murder enquiry. Any such reporting must not prejudice the right of the accused to a fair trial.

There is statutory and common law protection to ensure this. But if the media are not aware that someone is arrested in connection with that enquiry, let alone charged with a serious offence, something could be published which might unwittingly be damaging to the accused. Since the strict laws of contempt run from the time of arrest the editor and journalists could well face prosecution.

There are circumstances where it might be in the interests of justice for additional reporting restrictions to be imposed. That is a matter for the court. Such a decision should be made openly after legal argument. The events of March 13 were disturbing and alien to the whole tradition of the British legal system. Steps should be taken to ensure that they do not create a precedent.

Yours faithfully,
ARTHUR DAVIDSON (Chairman,
Fleet Street Lawyers' Society),
ALASTAIR BRETT (Secretary),
JUSTIN WALFORD
(Solicitor),
Savile Club, 69 Brook Street, W1.
March 25.

Defendants' costs

From Mr David Harper

Sir, Next month a trial will commence at Chelmsford Crown Court of about 15 individuals charged with offences related to public disorder in Colchester.

At the pre-trial hearing counsel estimated that the case would last several weeks. The defendants are young and mainly unemployed. Some therefore receive under £32 a week in benefit. Each of their weekly rail fares from Colchester during the trial will cost £24. Although this point was raised with the judge by counsel, both were unaware of any order which the judge might make to alleviate the problem.

If such is the case then — as Mr Spens said (letter, March 24) — where has the presumption of innocence gone?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID HARPER,
7 Braiswick,
Colchester, Essex.
March 24.

Weighing pigs

From Mr W. G. McPherson

Sir, The weighing of Irish pigs, as described by Mr Fred Carvalho (letter, March 24), may not have been quite so haphazard as it seems. The "graded boudiers" were probably handily shaped stones of known weight; these were in common use in this area in bygone days indeed. I had two myself, with an iron ring fixed atop. I used them for holding open the garage doors.

I do not think the weight of the stones would have been "estimated" — the weight of each stone would have been known and the summation correct to a pound.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
W. G. MCPHERSON,
37 Granary Street,
Huntly, Aberdeenshire.

Fox-terriers

From Mrs Betty Harle

Sir, The "two small dogs" depicted in Jacques Henri Lartigue's *Avenue du Bois de Boulogne*, as shown in *The Times* of March 24, are English smooth-haired fox-terriers.

They were very popular dogs in both England and France in the early years of this century, and in France were known as "Le Fox". This elegant and intelligent little dog is much rarer in England today. The Jack Russell having taken its place as a hunt terrier and family pet.

Yours sincerely,
BETTY J. HARLE,
Hawkeswell Farm,
34 Portland Road, Oxford.
March 24.

Sunday treat

From Mr Peter J. Beer

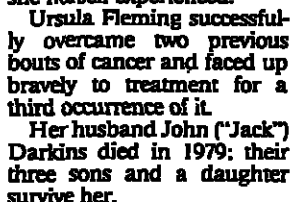
Sir, With the cards and flowers on Mothering Sunday I hope mothers will be offered simnel cake. Laurence Whistler, in *The English Festivals* (Heinemann, 1947), cited three kinds:

The Shrewsbury kind has a thick crust; the Devizes kind is in the shape of a star, crustless; the Bury kind is flatter, but thicker in the centre, compounded of spices, currants and candied peel and generally round in shape or elongated.

Yours faithfully,
PETER BEER,
2 Hill Cottages,
Reepham,
Nr Norwich, Norfolk.
March 22.

DR JOHN SHEEHAN

URSULA FLEMING



Church services tomorrow

OF FRIENDS (Quakers), 52 St Martins
La WC2: 11. Meeting for worship.

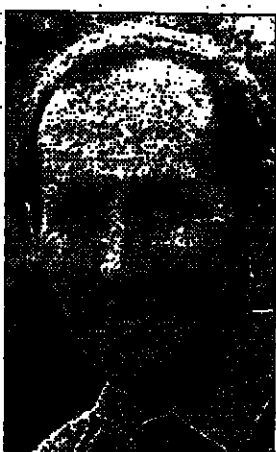
**WORLD CUP
FOUND IN
GARDEN
NO DAMAGE TO
TROPHY**

CONFIDENTIAL - SECURITY INFORMATION

March 20.

Profile

John Grieves, senior partner at Freshfields, the City law firm, gets wacky if he does not run his regular 40 miles a week where he makes quite a few of his decisions. He averages four hours sleep a night, is always in the office before eight in the morning and used to work round the clock before he became a partner. Page 23

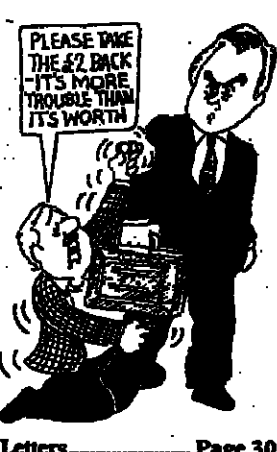


Ernie's secret

How about the Premium Bonds? One of the great mysteries of the world, although National Savings continues to tell people that the numbers are randomly generated. Page 27

Hedging bets

ECU Group foreign currency mortgage holders have been told this week that they could take out currency futures contracts to protect against falls in the pound. Page 27



Good listener

Jane Woodhead was appointed as a second building societies ombudsman last year because of a tripling in the number of complaints received in the first four years of its operation. She expects the number of complaints to double in the current year, which ends on Tuesday, a pattern that is expected to be repeated by other ombudsmen preparing reports. Increased charges and poor stock markets are pushing customers to complain. Page 25



Yen for recovery

The Japanese market continued to fall this week and is standing at about half its 1989 peak. Some fund managers think there will be an imminent recovery, others are doubtful. Page 29

Check on cheque

The Co-operative bank is the first to change the wording in its cheque books to protect customers against fraud after changes in the law. Other banks are following suit. Page 26



Tax poser

People should think twice before making provision against inheritance tax in case they are caught by changes to tax law. Many will be limited in how much tax they can avoid. Page 28

Election fears hit equities

BY MICHAEL CLARK

MOUNTING fears in the City about a Labour victory at the polls saw government securities and share prices fall sharply.

The FT-SE 100 index lost 24.3 points to 2,447.9 as a steady trickle of gloomy economic and political news sent investors running for cover.

Market-makers went on the defensive, marking shares lower as word circulated in the Square Mile that an opinion poll carried out for London Weekend Television showed Labour establishing a decisive lead over the Conservatives in London and capturing the capital's marginal seats.

Government securities suffered falls of up to 1/2 at the longer end as the Bundesbank said German interest rates would remain high for the foreseeable future. Johann Wilhelm Gaddum, a senior Bundesbank council member, said talk of an early interest rate cut was "without foundation".

Selling pressure was described as light. Most fund managers and investors were anxious to square up their positions before the weekend.

Banks were worried after learning that Heron International, the private company headed by Gerald Ronson, was in talks with its banks aimed at rescheduling its £1.2 billion of debt. Barclays, reckoned to have the biggest exposure to Heron, was the worst hit. It fell 13p to 332p.

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Letters, page 17
Market report, page 24

Disposals planned to fund repayments

Ronson seeks extension on £1.2bn debts

BY NEIL BENNETT, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

HERON International, the second-largest private company in Britain, has called an emergency meeting with its bankers next week to seek more time to repay its £1.2 billion debts.

Heron, owned by Gerald Ronson, the entrepreneur jailed for his role in the Guinness affair, said it would meet banks on Friday. Mr Ronson will ask for the maturity dates of its loans and Swiss bonds to be extended. The group is expected to ask for 18-24 months extra to repay part of its debt.

The group has suspended its Eurobonds and Swiss franc bonds on the Swiss market until the meeting. The value of the bonds had plunged on growing concern about financial problems at Heron, and at yesterday's suspension they were priced at between only 30 and 43 per cent of their face value.

Heron needs an extension on loan repayments falling due in the middle of next year. The group's problems have been caused by the recession, which has hit its property, petrol station and motor distribution businesses. Heron also lost heavily on an ill-timed expansion into America.

stressed it would repay all its principal and interest in full, and that it was not asking for additional loans. The debts will be repaid by disposals. Trading operations would not be affected, Heron added.

In February, Mr Ronson hired Price Waterhouse, the accountant, to review its finances. Heron is also being advised on the debt reconstruction by UBS Phillips & Drew, the investment bank, and Allen & Overy, the City solicitor.

Heron's problems are the second blow for Barclays within a week. Barclays, a major banker to Olympia & York, is Heron's lead banker and has been discussing the group's problems for several weeks. The bank is thought to have an exposure of more than £100 million to Heron. National Westminster is said to have a similar amount, while Midland has lent about £20 million. Lloyds has also been a lender. Credit Suisse was the manager of most of the group's £448 million bond issues. Almost all Heron's debt is unsecured.

Heron has wide interests in property and motoring, with substantial sites in Britain, America and Spain. Its housebuilding arm sold more than 700 houses in 1990 and it owns the HR Owen dealership chain, the Suzuki car

import franchise and more than 150 petrol stations.

Heron's last balance sheet shows the extent of its troubles. In the year to end-March 1991, pre-tax profits plunged from £65.3 million to just £2 million. The debts of £1.2 billion compare with net assets of only £585 million.

The figures also included a £66 million provision against discontinued activities in America. Heron is still trying to sell a 48,000-acre development in Arizona, and is winding down its American video distribution business.

Heron is thought to have plunged into losses this year after further decline in the property and motor markets. The group could also face heavy writedowns on its assets. Last year, its property interests were valued at £915 million and may suffer a writedown due to the collapse in the market.

Heron also valued a 17 per cent stake in Control Securities, the property and leisure group, at £55 million, based on 1990 figures. Control's shares were suspended at 16.5p last year, making the stake worth just £11 million.

Mr Ronson's move to restore Heron's finances met with bankers' approval. Heron telephoned most of its banks before the news to warn them of the position.



In step with bankers: Gerald and Gail Ronson

Recovery depends on increase in spending, CBI says

BY ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE worst of the economic downturn might be over, but a significant recovery in Britain will occur this year only if consumers spend more and save less, the Confederation of British Industry said.

The employers' organisation published its views in an economic situation report, issued alongside its March industrial trends survey. The survey showed a slight improvement in home and export orders.

Overall, 55 per cent of the 1,439 companies surveyed reported order books below normal and only 8 per cent said they were exceptionally good. However, the negative balance of 47 per cent was five points better than companies reported for the CBI's February survey.

Export order books had also improved, although they remained well below normal levels.

David Wigglesworth, chairman of the CBI's economic situation committee, said: "Order books are at their best levels since January of last year, although improvements in demand are still patchy and, so far, have been met by a reduction in stocks."

"We hope to see a more significant improvement over the rest of the year as the pick-up in consumer spending begins to feed through to manufacturing industry."

The CBI's survey and economic report were published only two days after revised forecasts by the Engineering Employers Federation continued to point to a slow recovery beginning in the

summer. DAF, the Anglo-Dutch commercial vehicle builder, has also reported signs of a "modest" increase in UK demand.

The commercial vehicle market is regarded as a leading economic indicator. It has been in deep slump for more than two years.

The CBI, in its March situation report, says the latest monthly trends enquiry "suggests that the worst of the economic downturn may now be over".

However, it emphasises that export markets remain weak. "If the economic recovery is to be significant this year, the revival in consumer spending will clearly have to continue."

The CBI predicts that incomes for those in work will continue to rise ahead of inflation. It says, however, that the effects on the economy will be offset by rising unemployment.

"A sustained recovery in consumer spending is therefore likely to require some reduction in the savings ratio," it says.

This ratio, the proportion of after-tax income which is saved, fell from a peak of 11.3 per cent last spring to 10 per cent at the end of December. (At the beginning of 1988, it was as low as 4.1 per cent.)

The monthly trends enquiry showed that companies were still under intense competitive pressure.

The proportion of firms expecting to be able to raise prices, a positive balance of just 2 per cent, was the lowest March figure since the survey began in 1975.

A time to be cautious and frank

BY OUR BANKING CORRESPONDENT

THE past two years have been tough on Gerald Ronson, the property entrepreneur and one of the richest men in Britain.

News that Heron International, the group that he has spent his life building, is in financial trouble comes barely a year after he was released from prison, having served half a 12-month sentence for

his part in the Guinness affair.

The establishment has always had a love-hate relationship with Mr Ronson, who treats everyone he meets on his own terms.

At the start of last year, he was still prisoner PK8511 in Ford Open Prison. By July, he was shaking hands with the Queen Mother at the Royal Opera House and showing Princess Diana around the natural history

museum where he is a trustee. The previous month, he had returned to Ford as a visitor at an open day in aid of the Golf Trust, a charity, of which the Ronson Charitable Foundation is believed to be a generous sponsor.

Mr Ronson has reacted to the financial difficulties in his group with characteristic frankness. By taking the initiative to call a meeting with banks and present proposals for a debt reconstruction

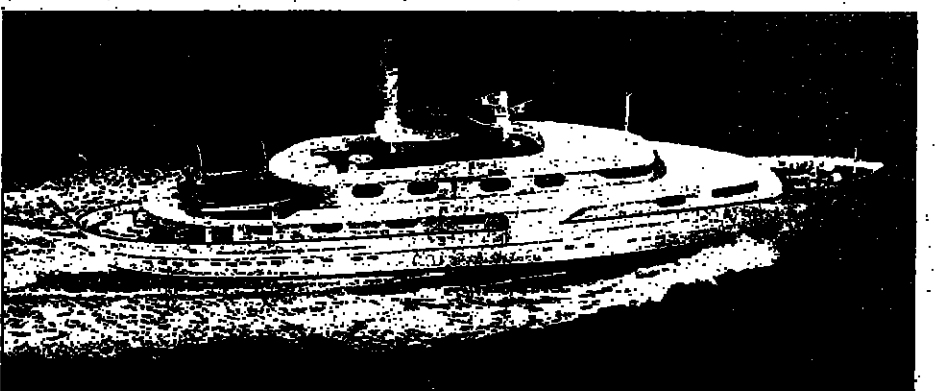
more than a year before the group claims difficulties are likely to emerge, he has strengthened his standing in the City.

He has long commanded respect from City figures. At Ronson's trial, Sir John Quinton, Barclays' chairman, gave him a glowing character reference.

Heron's financial problems will be particularly painful to Mr Ronson as they mean the disposal of one of his most cherished possessions, his luxury motor yacht. At 187ft, My Gail III has been listed as the second largest yacht in Britain, behind the Royal Yacht Britannia, and seven feet longer than Lady Ghislaine, the late Robert Maxwell's yacht.

My Gail III, named after Mr Ronson's wife, is owned by Heron Marine, a subsidiary of the group and has been for sale for more than six months. The asking price is believed to be \$25 million.

In the past, Mr Ronson has been criticised for being too cautious. Ironically, this may now save Heron.



Painful parting: Gerald Ronson is being forced to sell his cherished yacht

O&Y meets to reassure bankers

FROM PHILIP ROBINSON IN NEW YORK

ROBERT Miller and Thomas Johnson, the new financial team at Olympia & York Developments, were negotiating last night to head off any potential panic among bankers who are owed an estimated \$20 billion (£10 billion) by the Canadian property giant.

The two — Paul Reichmann, former O&Y president, is understood not to have attended the meeting in Toronto — faced 20 of the conglomerate's principal bankers at the first meeting between the parties since O&Y conceded it faced liquidity problems a week ago.

Those close to the talks said it was crucial that O&Y now establish stability among the lead bankers, and with it an orderly method of sorting out the details of the world's largest but most private property empire, run by the Reichmann

brothers. Leading the banks were Citicorp, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce and Hongkong and Shanghai Bank. A European bank is expected to be named today as a member of the steering committee to co-ordinate the banks' claims.

The selection is expected to be made from Barclays, Lloyds, Commerzbank, Credit Lyonnais and Credit Suisse. One banking source said yesterday: "Banks are always panicky during these kinds of initial negotiations. It is even more difficult here with a company where only a few executives know the whole picture."

Mr Miller and Mr Johnson are due to arrive in London tomorrow night for a similar meeting with European bankers involved in the Canary Wharf office project in London's Docklands.

Mr Reichmann will not travel with them; it is understood he is playing a very limited role in negotiations with the

bankers, but remains in Toronto running the O&Y business.

The meetings come amid a reported scramble by the major banks to gain control of more assets to back loans. More than 100 banks are believed to be involved as principals and syndicate banks. Analysts in New York are speculating on a two-tier restructuring programme: an immediate short-term agreement with the banks, which could include delays of interest payments and extensions of mortgages, and a later restructuring that will take account of how many of the smaller banks want to sell their debts at a loss.

The fine tuning of financial engineering is being led by Mr Miller, who played a key role in the financial rescue of the Chrysler car company. Mr Johnson is a highly respected international banker and a former president of Manufacturers Hanover, the American bank.

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30-year bonds 100 1/2 - 100 3/4

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£: \$1.7380 £: \$1.7380
£: DM2.8587 £: DM1.8448
£: Sfr2.6039 £: Sfr1.4977
£: FF6.6894 £: FF5.5787
£: Yen231.53 £: Yen133.17
£: Index90.2 £: Index94.8
ECU £0.714206 SDR £0.791032
£: ECU1.400166 £: SDR1.284171

London: New York:
AM \$340.35 pm \$340.50
close \$341.35 \$341.85 (1982-25)
New York:
Comex \$341.85 \$342.45

Brent (May) ... \$17.50 bbl (\$18.00)

RPI: 136.3 February (1987=100)
* Denotes midday trading price

Shell may cut over 4,000 jobs in the North Sea

By Ross TITMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

SHELL UK, the biggest operator in the North Sea oil province, is to cut its workforce by up to 4,230 over the next decade.

The cutbacks include a reduction of about 3,480 offshore workers, almost 12 per cent of the 30,000-strong offshore workforce in the British sector of the North Sea.

About 750 jobs will be shed from the onshore staff of Shell Exploration and Production in London and Aberdeen — a cut of 25 per cent. Offshore, about 40 per cent of Shell's 7,000 contractors and 1,700 direct employees will no longer be needed.

Shell said the workers would be displaced by better management and technological improvements enabling reduced manning on offshore platforms.

The high operating costs of the North Sea field and weak oil prices have led to strong pressures to contain costs, the company said.

The reductions are expected to be achieved through natural wastage and reduced use of contractors. Shell said it had "no plans for any large-scale redundancies, either onshore or offshore".

However, Roger Lyons, general secretary of MSF, the biggest union representing Shell exploration employees, called for urgent talks, and promised to keep the union's backing to members "in whatever action they decide to take". Mr Lyons said the company had a duty to keep employees informed of its plans so they could ensure the development of their careers.

He was also worried about the safety implications. "The number of direct Shell employees is already at a very low level," he said. "We are concerned that if these are re-

duced any further, the risks of an unsupervised and poorly trained contract workforce passes the threshold of safety." Shell said reducing the number of employees offshore would help increase safety by reducing exposure to potentially hazardous situations.

Shell's plans are likely to be mirrored by other operators in only a limited way. That is because Shell is responding to its particular circumstances as well as a general trend arising from the maturity of oil production on the UK continental shelf (UKCS), and technical improvements.

The average size of new discoveries has declined to about 50 million barrels. These can only be exploited economically if they are close to existing production platforms, to which they can be linked through sub-sea well-heads. Such production regimes require fewer staff.

Shell is modernising older platforms in the Brent field, partly to adapt them to producing a higher proportion of gas as oil output declines. The modified platforms will be simpler to maintain so will need fewer employees.

At the same time, some smaller gas platforms in the southern North Sea are being converted to unmanned installations.

BP, Shell's biggest North Sea rival, is already well advanced with a programme designed to cut UKCS production costs by 50 cents per barrel of oil produced. However, this has tended to concentrate on restructuring of operations because BP has a different mixture of operations that do not offer the modernisation opportunities available to Shell in the Brent field.

Fish firm will cut 150 jobs

More than 150 people will lose their jobs in Whitehaven, Cumbria, when Dawnfresh Seafoods, a fish processor, closes there at the end of the year.

Mr Alastair Salvesen, the chairman and managing director, said: "We have spent £2 million upgrading our factory here, but this has not been sufficient to meet the demands of the market in terms of quality and hygiene. We have, therefore, decided to close our factory here and relocate in Lanark, Scotland. We will initially be employing 170 people there."

Units knocked

Election nerves meant a quiet month for unit trusts in February. A net outflow of £30 million was the first negative figure since September 1990. During the month, £600 million of units were cashed in and £570 million were bought — a fall of £100 million on January. Funds under management increased by £305 million to £57.8 billion.

Breedon falls

Breedon reports a 39.7 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £2.76 million for the year to end January. The total dividend is held at 4.6p with an unchanged final of 2.85p.

BHP falls less than expected

FROM REUTERS IN MELBOURNE

RELIEF greeted an 8.6 per cent profit fall at BHP, Australia's largest company. Analysts had expected the drop in the three months to February 29 to be as high as 20 per cent.

Sharply lower oil profits were partly offset by improved steel and mineral earnings.

Net profit for the three months fell to A\$224.2 million (£99 million) with sales also down 8 per cent to A\$3.46 billion. Earnings over nine months were down 41.2 per cent to A\$630.9 million. The shares were up 14 cents to A\$13.36.

Third-quarter operating profits before tax rose 27.7 per cent to A\$458.8 million, but the tax bill soared to A\$215.6 million from A\$95.7 million because of non-deductible depreciation and exploration expenditure.

BHP said earnings from petroleum plunged to A\$83 million from A\$196.7 million. The corresponding quarter last year included a period of high oil prices during the Gulf war. Steel sales to the Australian market were up 6 per cent at 706,000 tons. Exports rose 33 per cent to 607,000 tons.

Election fails to deter British Data



Keeping to schedule: Stephen Crown, of BDM, which will be going public only a week before polling day

Hongkong Bank to seek a dual primary listing

FROM LULU YU IN HONG KONG

THE Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, headed by William Purves, will seek a dual primary listing in London and Hong Kong if its plan to take over Midland Bank succeeds.

The move sparked a controversy, and critics said there would be regulatory problems. Cynics called it a "one company-two exchanges" scenario — a reference to the "one country-two systems" concept that the British and the Chinese have pledged for the colony after 1997.

The banks said in a joint statement that HSBC Holdings, Hongkong Bank's parent company, would be subject to the full regulations

of both stock exchanges. "When there are differences in those regulations, the general principle will be that HSBC Holdings will, unless otherwise agreed with the relevant stock exchange, comply with those regulations which impose the higher standard of disclosure or the more onerous requirements."

The announcement comes at a time when Jardine Matheson, the largest British group in Hong Kong, has agreed to shift its primary listing in London but to retain a secondary listing in the colony. The group weathered much controversy but reached a compromise with the local exchange and regulatory watchdog.

The proposed new status of the Hongkong Bank is certain to confound Hong Kong's financial community and create difficulties for the regulatory authorities. There is confusion over who will decide which rule is more onerous, and what would happen if the question involved a "yes" or "no" rather than a degree of disclosure. Observers are also wondering

whether granting dual status in this case will create a precedent and lead to a string of similar requests from other companies. The regulations of the two respective securities markets vary on such issues as the takeover code, the approach to suspension of a firm, the publication of public announcements, and the approval of listing applications.

Members of the Hong Kong exchange's listing committee criticised the abruptness of the announcement by HSBC and the lack of consultation on the issue. One member said: "There are many administrative details that have yet to be worked out, and many grey areas."

The banks said: "An understanding in principle has been reached with the stock exchanges which will allow HSBC Holdings to maintain its existing primary listing on the Hong Kong exchange and, in addition, for its present listing on the London Stock Exchange to be recognised as a primary listing. The development is conditional upon HSBC's offer for Midland becoming unconditional in all respects."

BRITISH Data Management (BDM), a specialist data storage group, is to brave the choppy, pre-election waters by floating on the stock market only a week before polling day.

Stephen Crown, chairman, said the decision on timing had been taken last October and the company had decided to stick to its schedule with the agreement of its advisers N.M. Rothschild and Smith New Court. He said: "When you do a management buy-in, you inevitably take on high gearing... and it is frustrating to go on paying interest to the banks over the years." The float will raise £10 million for the company which will pay off borrowings.

BDM was the subject of a management buy-in from Britannia Security Group in 1989. Since then, the pre-tax losses of £1.7 million for 1989 have been turned into a forecast of profits of £2.38 million for the year to end-June 1992. The placing price of 125p a share values the company at £29 million and the three-man management team's 48 per cent stake at £14 million. A 1p final dividend is being paid for the year and the pro forma dividend yield is 4.25 per cent.

BDM will be the only UK quoted company dedicated exclusively to data management. It has about 20 per cent of Britain's £80 million data management market, but more than 40 per cent of the fast-growing oil exploration data market.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Benetton profits from controversy with £76m

BENETTON, the Italian fashion franchise, showed that controversial advertising campaigns pay off after all, reporting a 23.6 per cent rise in net profits and a 20 per cent increase in the dividend for 1991. Benetton has attracted criticism for its advertising, most recently the campaign depicting a dying AIDS patient. The posters were banned in a number of countries. Benetton aroused similar controversy last year with advertising posters showing a blood-stained newborn baby.

While these campaigns were vilified throughout the world, consumers stayed loyal, as revenues rose by 12 per cent to 2.3 trillion lire. Consolidated net profits increased by 23.6 per cent to L 164.8 billion (£76.7 million) while the dividend goes up from L 250 to L 300 a share. In 1990, Benetton cut the dividend from L 600 paid out the year before. The clothing company is 80 per cent owned by the Benetton family.

YJ Lovell accounts

YJ LOVELL'S delayed annual accounts have been qualified by Ernst & Young, the auditor, as depending on the continued support of the group's bankers. The accounts have been prepared on a going-concern basis but Lovell's banks, led by Barclays, will review existing facilities in November. E&Y gave warning that the review could mean reducing the value of assets and making provisions against further liabilities. The housebuilder and property developer began talks with the banks in December after breaching loan covenants. The banks have reserved the right to require repayment of all or part of Lovell's £106 million borrowings at any time on the vote of banks holding at least 75 per cent of the loans. Lovell directors believe the agreement will provide sufficient funds to meet its needs. Anthony Hitchens, chairman, warned shareholders that apart from Lovell Partnerships, which builds homes for local authorities, all the group's businesses were experiencing harsh trading conditions.

Recession hits UDO

UDO Holdings, the office supplies and drawing equipment group, suffered a 34.8 per cent slump in first-half profits after customers significantly reduced their spending as the recession continued to bite. Pre-tax profits fell to £2.71 million in the six months to the end of January, against £4.15 million last time. Turnover was down 11.6 per cent to £25 million. Mike Wright, the chairman, said that there had been several recent strategic acquisitions that were expected to increase the volume of turnover through existing outlets and extend the group's geographical coverage. The group's cash balances at the half year amounted to £14.9 million, an increase of nearly £1.5 million in the six months. Earnings per share slid to 6.23p, against 9.41p a share last time. The interim dividend has been raised to 1.94p, up from 1.62p previously.

Milan firm acquired

MENVIERS-SWAIN, an emergency lighting and fire alarm group, is expanding in Italy by acquiring Componenti Sistemi Antifurto (CSA), a Milan maker and seller of fire and burglar alarms and components. The price paid will be up to £2.8 million. The USA-quoted company is making an initial payment of 2.09 billion lire (£970,000), to be satisfied by a vendor placing of 279,070 new Menvier-Swain shares, with deferred payments depending on CSA's future profits to the end of next year. CSA made pre-tax profits of 1.3 billion lire in the year to December 31, on sales of 4.7 billion lire. Roger Fletcher, Menvier-Swain's chief executive, said: "I believe the acquisition of CSA will provide a strong base in Italy from which to grow and that there are significant opportunities for CSA to inter-trade with our other operating companies. From a financial point of view, on a pro forma basis, our earnings per share will increase by over 5 per cent as a result of this acquisition."

Relyon pegs payout

RELYON Group, which has interests ranging from bedding and cabinet furniture making to surveillance equipment, maintained its dividend despite a 17.5 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £2.67 million in the year to end-December. Turnover edged to £42.5 million against £42.1 million last time. The company said that 1991 had turned into a very difficult year, with second-half profits eroded considerably by the recession and exceptional costs of product development for automotive products. Relyon said this year had started well, with increased profitability expected following improved orders and selling prices as well as weaker raw material costs. The proposed sale of Trident, which makes the consoles used by recording engineers to mix sounds, is expected to result in a write-off in the region of £2 million. Earnings dropped to 8.37p a share, against 9.28p a share last time. The final dividend is being maintained at 3.15p, giving an unchanged total of 4.9p for the year.

API appoints Smith

API, the packaging company that was rocked by an unsuccessful takeover bid and boardroom upheaval last year, has secured the services of Michael Smith as chief executive. Mr Smith, aged 45, joins from the Jefferson Smurfit Group where he is chief executive of the print, packaging and converting division. His appointment is a major breakthrough for API, which at one stage last year boasted a single executive director after the chairman and managing director resigned. The company, which defeated a £32.8 million hostile bid from NMC, appointed Moger Woolley, former chief executive of DRG, as non-executive chairman. In the year to the end of September, pre-tax profits of £703,000 were more than offset by an extraordinary charge of £1.17 million, including defence costs of £1.04 million.

Growth of narrow money slows again

By COLIN NARBROUGH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

BANK of England figures on notes in circulation point to renewed slowdown this month in the annual growth rate of M0, the narrow money measure, suggesting continued consumer reluctance to spend.

The weekly data on notes, which form the bulk of M0, showed an annual fall of 2.4 per cent in the week to Wednesday.

City economists said the sharp fall mainly reflected the effect of last year's Budget, which drove consumers out to the shops to beat value-added tax increases. Spending was probably raised at this time last year by the early Easter holiday.

So far this month, however, the weekly figures indicate

that M0 has slowed to an annual growth rate of about 1.2 per cent, excluding the heavily distorted latest week. Last week, annual growth was 1 per cent. In February, the annual rate for the month was 2.2 per cent.

Philip Tyson, economist at UBS Phillips & Drew, said M0 growth would probably stay below 2 per cent on a flat trend in the months ahead. After a stronger than expected 0.4 per cent rise in February, retail sales were now not expected to show any significant pickup for some time, he said.

Simon Briscoe, economist at Midland Montagu, said the notes data were still weak, probably reflecting pre-election nervousness.

Portmeirion boosts its sales in America

By PHILIP PANGALOS

PORTMEIRION Pottery (Holdings), the Stoke-on-Trent pottery and decorated ceramic tableware group, suffered a 23.7 per cent decline in profits as the recession took its toll on UK demand.

Pre-tax profits fell from £3.42 million to £2.61 million in the year to end-December. Sales rose 4.8 per cent to £20.4 million, largely due to a favourable exchange rate.

George Hesp, managing director, said early action to control costs and reduce capital expenditure had ensured that the group remained profitable during the difficult climate. The exception to an otherwise worldwide reduction in demand was America where sales advanced by 23 per cent. The final dividend is



Hesp: action on costs being maintained at 5.1p, giving shareholders an unchanged total of 7.35p for the year.

Earnings dropped to 16.68p a share, down from 23.4p a share last time.

Dirty takeover battle for Wilkes heads towards conclusion

A DIRTY takeover battle comes to an end at 1pm on Monday, by which time shareholders in James Wilkes will have made up their minds whether or not they want Petrocon's paper.

The terms of Petrocon's takeover bid are 13-for-3. With Petrocon trading at 35p yesterday, the offer values each Wilkes share at 151.6p. Meanwhile, in the stock market, Wilkes shares traded at 132p. One reading of this apparent anomaly is that Petrocon will fail, and Wilkes's shares will "fall back" to around 132p.

Neither side can claim this has been a clean battle fought solely on financial criteria. Accusations and criticism of management style have flown in all directions, and the takeover panel has had to rap knuckles. Wilkes, however, has responded to some of the

criticism, and asset sales have been made.

Other disposals are in the wings, and after such a poor year in 1991, when total pre-tax profits slipped from £5.61 million to £1.89 million (felled in part by an exceptional £2.76 million charge), Wilkes badly needs to improve profitability.

Petrocon has not yet issued preliminary 1991 results, and says this is because in February it made a detailed trading statement. It says year-end 1991 accounts "would not help Wilkes shareholders to make up their minds".

Considering Petrocon is offering shares on financial criteria, this is an odd statement. The bidder declined to say how many shares were in, or believed to be in, its camp, and it is not convinced that

Wilkes can tackle its debt burden effectively in sufficient time to ensure that net earnings per share go forward again.

Wilkes, meanwhile, needs to make an urgent repair to its balance sheet and pay attention to a gearing ratio that rose from 103 per cent to 150 per cent in its 1991 financial year. A reduction to around 60 per cent would be a welcome start.

Lower costs and the more focused management might see Wilkes's pre-tax profits advance this year to between £4.5 million and £5.5 million, to put the shares on a prospective rating of between 7.8 and 6 times.

On balance, Wilkes should be given the chance to retain its independence.

see Petrocon off, and prove itself.

HTV

HTV, the Wales and west of England independent TV contractor, has more riding on the election than most. Advertising revenue was particularly depressed this month and only a clear-cut majority is thought likely to persuade advertisers to start spending again.

A hung parliament would make a second election more likely, and with election coverage costing the company about £300,000 in additional programming, that is an expense HTV could do without. In addition, in its manifesto the Labour party states it would

initiate a monopolies enquiry into ownership of TV companies.

Pre-tax profits of only £441,000 for the year to end-December, down from £4.9 million, do not augur well, whatever the colour of the government, given that the company bid £20.5 million to retain its franchise.

The HTV board, led by Louis Sherwood, sees it differently, arguing that the company, which made almost half its television staff redundant before the bid, is one of the lowest-cost producers and stands to gain when the network scheduling body is deregulated next year. It also points out that once the Channel 4 levy contribution is removed, the company will be paying very little more in its cash bid than it had previously in the form of Exchequer levy.

Even so, HTV will be counting on a rise in advertising expenditure after the election for the sums to start making sense.

Net advertising revenue last year fell in real terms by 7.5 per cent to £98.5 million, with HTV's share slipping slightly to 6.2 per cent. The balance sheet has taken a bit of a pounding with £8 million in franchise bid costs, restructuring charges and other provisions taken below the line. A maintained final dividend of 2.25p makes an unchanged 3.75p.

The shares have enjoyed a good run since the franchise win, but the continuing uncertainty in the sector is still in the price. Profits of £8 million would give 7p of earnings, valuing the shares at just nine times this year's earnings. Hold for the 8 per cent yield.



Different view: Louis Sherwood, chairman of HTV

BUSINESS PROFILE: John Grieves

Marathon man who decides on the run

The senior partner of Freshfields is at the top, but he has never travelled first class, as Carol Leonard finds out

The bodies of people who regularly run long distances seem to go through a profound physiological change. They become long, lean and sinewy, their movements become somehow more angular, as surplus fat disappears, and the skin on their faces takes on a taut and dry appearance.

John Grieves, the senior partner of Freshfields, regarded along with Slaughter & May as one of the best law firms in London, regularly runs 40 miles a week. If he is in training for a marathon — he has completed four so far — it will be considerably more. And he looks the part.

"After running, something does happen to your body," Grieves says. "There is a peculiar chemical change and you get very twitchy and crampy if you don't run for a bit. It's a good time to think, you are totally alone, and I make quite a lot of decisions that way."

Grieves, aged 57, but with a far more youthful gait, also accredits his exercise with causing his high level of energy. He rises at five every morning, averages four hours sleep a night, is always in the office before eight and, before being made senior partner, frequently worked around the clock. "An all-night session here is no big deal, people do it all the time," he says. "But I think being fit helps. You get tired less quickly."

As he speaks, Grieves gesticulates expansively with his hands. His pale blue eyes fix you with a direct gaze, his nose is large and roman and his face is long and narrow. He smiles readily, has a full, kind mouth and is far from nervous. He might mumble and gloss over specific details when discussing the more intimate aspects of his own personality, but this is caused more by a desire not to sound boastful than a conversational deficiency.

Grieves, who took over the senior partnership of Freshfields from Hugh Peppiatt in May

1990, could get away with being stuffy, old fashioned and arrogant. Freshfields, after all, has for the past 250 years been legal advisers to the Bank of England. The firm also acts for the takeover panel, numerous government departments and has a formidable reputation in mergers and acquisitions. But he is not. Instead he is surprisingly direct, unexpectedly relaxed and exceptionally bright. He became a partner at the age of 29, was head of the company department at 39 and was one of the driving forces behind a decision to bring in McKinsey, the management consultant, in 1989. "Our concern was that the growth of the firm had been such that its structure was outmoded and that this was causing a log jam of decisions," he explains. "Because of this log jam there wasn't any person or body concentrating on strategy or policy." Freshfields was

'He is not the sort of person who comes in and asks if you have heard the latest Essex girl joke, that is not his style, but he is not prudish'

his role within the firm as more "hands on" than his forerunner's. Far from being old fashioned, furnished with antiques, Freshfields' Fleet Street offices look more like a film set for *LA Law*.

"As far as I know, we are the only firm to have done all that," Grieves says. "We have been at the forefront of management among the big law firms. I went to Harvard to learn about managing and finance. But the other thing I found tremendously educating was understanding much more how businessmen thought, their motivations and pressures."

Grieves, although he will normally greet strangers with a frosty reserve, is, beneath that slightly awkward facade, the sort of sen-



Partners in law: Ann and John Grieves both had to qualify before they were allowed to marry

sitive man who quickly tunes in to other people's thought processes, emotions and reactions. They might not realise it, but he can psyche himself into their mental position with comparative ease. "I am quite warm when people get to know me, but I suspect that the initial image might not be," he says. "If you talked to my wife you would immediately say that she was a warm person, whereas I take more time to get to know. Yes, there is a reserve."

Graham Nicholson, Freshfields' managing partner, agrees with Grieves' self-analysis. "On a superficial level you might think that he was a bit of a loner. But that is not right," he says. "There is a good deal of warmth there, but not an unnecessary amount. He is not a hater fellow, well met. He was managing the company department when I qualified into it and I remember finding him pretty daunting at that time. But he is a very compassionate man, very diligent and uniformly fair. He

also has a good sense of humour, he can guffaw on occasions, but in business it is kept under control. He is not the sort of person who comes in and asks if you have heard the latest Essex girl joke, that is not his style, but he is not prudish either."

Control is a word that springs to mind frequently with regard to Grieves. He explains that his sense of humour has to be controlled because it is often misunderstood. "I value a sense of humour very highly, and mine is quite dry," he says. "I quite like the understated and that is not always the right style for a senior partner. It does get misunderstood."

His temper is similarly kept under control. Nicholson has only seen him lose it once. "Someone had called into question his good faith when it was unjustified," he recalls. "It was a controlled loss of temper but it was ferocious, nevertheless, and it had a salutary effect on the person concerned." Grieves, who admits that he can

shed tears listening to Elgar's violin concerto, also talks about the need to control emotion in professional life. "You do get churned up by things, of course you do, but I would not show it. I'm a great believer in being professional and I think part of that is controlling yourself."

Another key facet of Grieves' make-up is religion, arguably a further form of restraint. A committed Christian, he goes to church every Sunday and helps to transport elderly parishioners once a month. "Yes it is important to me. My parents were Methodists and I was a Methodist to start with, but while I was up at Oxford I became more attracted to the Church of England service and I was confirmed while I was there."

He was then 23. It was largely because of his religious beliefs that he lived at home with his parents until he married Ann. "It was for religious and moral reasons," he says. Does he disapprove of cohabiting, then? "I'm not preach-

ing but I do wish there were less of it," he says. "I wish people would just wait to get married." He disapproves, perhaps understandably, of long courtships. "I don't believe in long engagements, it is a very unnatural state. I think if you are engaged you ought to get married within six months."

His own engagement lasted 18 months — "too long, frankly" — because Ann's father refused to pay for the wedding until they had both qualified. He met his wife, also a lawyer, at Pinsent & Co, the Birmingham firm. She now works as a legal aid lawyer in Wandsworth, south-west London, specialising in matrimonial work, and cycles to work from their five-bedroomed Putney home.

"She is probably more naturally vivacious than I am, but she is not as competitive as me, and she has less will power," Grieves uses the word competition more in its connotation with sport — he once played rugby for Molesey — than with ambition.

Not naturally a woman's man, he admits that even at Oxford he was shy of mixing with girls. "I had virtually no girl friends. In those days it was work and rugby,

senior partner of the firm before him, as well as president of the Law Society, and his uncle was chief cashier to the Bank of England. Grieves, in contrast, had a father who had been a town planning officer in Worcester, was a day boy at a nearby private school — King's — lived in a semi detached house and began his legal career with a provincial firm. He has, however, no trace of a regional accent.

"I had progressively felt the need to come to London, it was where all the most interesting work was going on, and when Pinsent & Co offered me a partnership I knew I had to make up my mind," he says. The partnership offer was declined.

Grieves admits that he was ambitious, but denies that he ever set his sights on the senior partner's chair. "Definitely not," he says. "I can remember thinking, way back, who on earth would want to do that? My professional ambition has always been to have a successful practice."

In contrast to Freshfields' establishment image, Grieves admits that he is more attracted to people who are "frank and disarming. People who aren't buttoned up. No, I don't like stuffy people. I like people who can enjoy life and are fun." He uses the word frankly often. Despite his salary, well into six figures, Grieves says he is not motivated by money alone. "I wouldn't go anywhere just because someone offered me more money, it would have to be the

'I would never do something to someone just for the sake of putting the boot in. I would be tough, but there is no need to exploit anyone'

right job." Nor is he ostentatious. He drives a Saab 900 Turbo and owns just one house, bought 20 years ago. He has never flown first class, even on business, and for family holidays they always travel "at the back of the plane".

His wife summarises him well. "He has an extraordinary Christian faith, an absolutely iron will power and he is like Blackpool rock — if you slice him open you'll find Freshfields stamped all the way through. There is a steel strip in all successful men, they have got to have it right from the word go. But some of them burn out along the way. John was fortunate in that he was never pushed — he has been able to drive himself, at his own pace, every step of the way."

WEEK ENDING Matthew Bond

Avoiding the whirlpool in a ship of the desert

IN THE matter of import and export we, as a nation, have long been champions of the imbalance of trade, almost invariably at our own expense.

February, we now learn, was a particularly fine example of this tradition, showing that even in the darkest hour of deepest recession we still managed to import £1 billion more than we sold to the rest of the world. The stock market duly celebrated in traditional manner by falling almost 25 points until being partially revived by a whiff of that most exotic of price-sensitive scents, the opinion polls that actually show the Conservatives ahead.

So established is this pattern, that City economists have become well-practised in their explanations as to why the trade figures can safely be ignored. One of their favourites is to pass the blame on to the poor statisticians who collate such figures, pointing out that if all the deficits and surpluses from the countries of the world are added up, the answer is not the equilibrium that theory would suggest, but a thumping deficit for the entire world.

At this point economists tend to fall about laughing, pointing out the absurdity of this apparent aberration and what a good thing it is there are economists around to explain away such things. But recently the chuckles have fallen rather quiet.

For more and more events would suggest an alternative and economically awesome explanation. Could it be that the statisticians have been right all along? Could there really be some sort of vast financial "black hole" that is silently and relentlessly sucking up the world's wealth? Could the mythical Charybdis of economic catastrophe theory be fact?

Preposterous I hear you say. But think again. It certainly provides a very plausible explanation for much of what is currently going on.

The events of the week

would suggest that some unseen hand has just turned Charybdis on to full power, with the result that wealth is now disappearing at an unprecedented rate.

First, there were the Reichmanns, the Canadian brothers responsible for Canary Wharf, in London's Dockland, and the owners of millions of square feet of office space in Canada and America. For years the words "lucky wealthy" have been compulsory precursors to any mention of their name.



But then the sirens got to work.

Rumour turned to restructuring in a flash. Estimates of the debts owed by the family firm, Olympia & York, rose seemingly on a daily basis — £5 billion, £810 billion, £820 billion, US\$20 billion — but then when you're past the first billion who's counting or, in the case of secretive O&Y, who's guessing?

But the sirens were far from satisfied. Within hours, it became clear that the mighty Getty Trust, at least the museum part, was running out of money to continue its massive art buying spree.

If the Reichmanns and the Getty trustees were having trouble resisting the call, what chance had lesser mor-

als, especially given the potential for even less alluring calls from one John Smith? Answer: very little.

But while the middle classes have another ten days of grace, those formerly occupying the wealthier echelons of British society were not so fortunate. Gerald Renson of Heron fame ran into a tiny touch of the Reichmanns and is now talking to his banks about the minor matter of £1.2 billion of debt while, Peter de Savary, former owner of Land's End, John O'Groats and expensive areas of Essex marsh, revealed that two of his houses were collectively for sale at a price of £8.3 million, as part of a programme tactfully described as retrenchment.

With Charybdis gathering strength, few aspects of the global financial system were left unaffected. The Tokyo stock market fell to a new five-year low, gold continued to explore price levels it had not seen for six years and *Punch* announced that it had breathed its last. Was there nothing that could be depended upon? Was there no wealth to be found?

Well of course there was. It was just a question of knowing where to look. The chairman's office of recently privatised industries is always a good place to start, particularly at moments of political sensitivity. Bang on electoral cue, Robert Evans, chairman of British Gas, unveiled a £1,252 a week pay rise taking his 1991 salary to £435,222, including an £84,500 bonus presumably linked to the company's splendid performance in the ultra competitive gas supply market.

But full marks for inventiveness, go, as ever, to Lorrho's Tiny Rowland, whose search for some way to reduce debts of over £1 billion came to a £177 million successful conclusion somewhere deep in the Libyan desert. With Charybdis beckoning, a case of being caught between the desert and the deep blue sea?

Cadbury still prepared to buy

FROM REUTERS IN TORONTO

CADBURY Schweppes has said it is still interested in any acquisition opportunities that might arise. The company last week announced it had agreed to buy Fensa Aguas Minerales, a Mexican mineral water company, for £188 million.

David Jinks, group financial director, told a meeting of the Toronto society of financial analysts that the company believed the Mexican venture would "definitely" increase revenues. He said further acquisitions were probable, despite pressure from the recession in Britain. Mr Jinks added that it was too early to make revenue predictions for 1992. He said: "The recession is still there. We do not see any improvement in the economic climate in the UK, Europe or Australia."

The company said the Mexican market was an important strategic target because it is the second-largest soft drinks market in the world. Its citizens consume 130 litres of carbonated beverage a year per capita.

Fensa Aguas Minerales, the leading mineral water company in the country, commands a 68 per cent share of the mineral water market. The acquisition would bump Schweppes' share of the soft drinks market to 5.7 per cent from 1.8 per cent.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Financial experts have been getting to grips with the implications of a possible Labour victory. The shadow budget has prompted a list of suggestions on actions to take, especially by high earners, including taking part of next year's income now...

How to beat the Labour budget Business, The Sunday Times tomorrow

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*Source: Micropal, offer to offer, net income reinvested 1.11.88 to 16.3.92. You should remember that the price of units and the income from them can go down as well as up.

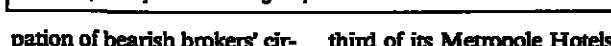
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Chill political wind blows shares and bonds lower

Bld	Offer	Wdy of	Yrd %
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	Wdy	Yld
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Reckitt & Colman	636p (-10p)
Rank Org	648p (-14p)
Medeva	286p (-13p)
Glaxo	783p (-19p)
Charter Cons	475p (-10p)

MJ Gleason	915p	(-10p)
Travis Perkins	190p	(-13p)
Hammerson 'A'	405p	(-12p)
Closing Prices..Page 31		
UNIT-LINKED INSUR		

19p lower at 529p after making a long-awaited presentation to analysts. Lord Young, chairman, said Mercury was performing well and had experienced an upturn in traffic

□ **Singapore** — Shares edged marginally lower in dull trading. Interest was focused mainly on Malaysian stocks traded over the counter, brokers said.

Continental Ltd	18 1/2	18 1/2	McDougal Inc
Continuum Ed	34 1/2	34 1/2	McGraw Hill
Cummins Corp	26 1/2	26 1/2	Mead Corp
Cummins Inc	15 1/2	16 1/2	Medtronic
Cummins 4	27 1/2	27 1/2	Mellon Bk
Cummins 5	26 1/2	26 1/2	Melville Corp
Cummins Nat Gas	34 1/2	34 1/2	Metric Inc
Cummins Rail	82	82 1/2	Merrill Lynch
Cummins Inds	55 1/2	55 1/2	Metropolitan M
Cummins Inc	32 1/2	31 1/2	Michell Corp
Cummins Truck	87	86 1/2	Minorsco

60%	60%	Tobacco Corp	20%	20%
62%	62%	Tribune	45%	45%
37%	38	Tyco Labs	37%	37%
74%	76	UAL Corp	144%	145
38%	38%	UST Inc	27%	28%
48%	48	USX Marathon	21%	21%
146%	147%	USX NV	98%	98%
57	56%	Union Camp	53%	54
87%	88%	Union Carbide	24%	25%
59%	59%	Union Pacific	47%	46%
66%	64%	Union Carb	9%	10%

[illegible]

Salesme

Playing the insurance game

Large increases in household insurance premiums are forcing substantial numbers of people to change insurance companies, or at least to obtain some quotes to reassure themselves that they are not being ripped off too badly.

Such telephone quotes are compared, and the best value policy from a well-known company is often chosen. How much faith can be put in such quotes should be in direct proportion to the stature of the organisation. But that no longer appears to be the case.

A reader, who felt his home insurance at £500 was too high, obtained several quotes, including one from the National Westminster, his bank. The NatWest came up with the cheapest quote. As it had always given the customer good service, he agreed to the premium of £403.40 and sent off a cheque.

This week, a letter arrived stating that cover had started on March 18. It then went on to apologise to the customer, saying

that he was misquoted at the time of the telephone call and could he, therefore, forward an additional premium of £152.60 so that the policy could be issued. This makes the cover more expensive than it would have been with his original insurer and the customer now wishes that he had stayed put.

He also feels trapped into the higher premium. The cover offered by NatWest is already running. To change to another company would be messy and could involve the reader being out of pocket for a long time after he pays a premium to another company and waits for a refund from the bank.

When asked, NatWest could not say immediately if the customer was always made to pay when its insurance subsidiary gave a wrong quote over the telephone, which resulted in the bank obtaining business that it



COMMENT

LINDSAY COOK
WEEKEND MONEY EDITOR

otherwise would not have done. Yesterday, the bank finally said the letter had been a mistake and the customer will not have to pay more.

Should it happen to other customers, the bank's staff should only have to look at last year's insurance ombudsman's report for guidance on who pays for mistakes. He ruled that companies must take the consequences of mistakes their staff make. If a low premium is quoted in error, then the company must stand the loss. In one case, a company had quoted £25 a month

when the premium should have been £95. In another, the policy schedule showed a monthly benefit when it should have been annual, while in a third, the policy was described as "with profits" when it should have said "without profits".

If the company had spotted the error before the customer was able to send off his cheque, then it could legitimately ask for more. But once someone feels trapped in a 12-month policy, it is not playing fair.

Any insurance company or bank that told a customer of such

a mistake, but said it was not going to penalise the customer, should have a policyholder for life.

Clear winner

The case for full cash disclosure of commissions and charges received a boost this week, when a City debate was won by the team proposing that disclosure would lead to a better market for investors.

Jean Eaglesham, of the Consumers' Association, and Dr Keith Bradley, of the London School of Economics, were the victors. The opposition came from independent financial advisers and an insurance company.

In May, the Securities and Investments Board plans to make new rules that will confirm its view that investors should not be given full disclosure at the point of sale.

In the weeks that follow, before the departure from the board of Sir David Walker for Lloyds Bank and of Sir Gordon Borrie from the Office of Fair Trading, investors can only hope that common sense will prevail.

The OFT, which has long campaigned for full disclosure, will not enter the battle until the rules are made. It will then assess whether the rules are anti-competitive and fair to investors.

It was Sir Gordon's belief that full disclosure of commission in cash terms should be given to investors, so that they could compare whether a broker was unduly influenced by commission, that set the review of disclosure of commission by the board under way.

The trade department also has to be satisfied that the interests of consumers are being well served by the information they are given. Any minister, of whatever political complexion, is more likely to think of the interests of the young consumers ahead of those of the large insurance companies if his party has a tiny majority.

Ombudsmen have had a busy year. Lindsay Cook looks at their role in settling disputes about financial services

Complaints swamp the City peace makers

CUSTOMER complaints are swamping the financial ombudsmen in the wake of increased charges, falling house prices, higher premiums, poor stock market performance and recessionary pressures on companies.

This week Dr Julian Farrand, the insurance ombudsman, said that his office handled more than 40,000 enquiries last year, and that number was rising. The bureau dealt with 4,334 new cases, and in addition received 13,899 written enquiries and another 26,048 by telephone.

Stephen Edell and Jane Woodhead, the building societies ombudsmen, expect the number of complaints to have doubled during the current year, which ends on Tuesday.

In 1990, the office reported that it had made rulings on 50 per cent more cases than the previous year. The tripling of the office's workload in its first four years forced the appointment of Mrs Woodhead as the second ombudsman. This year, obsolete accounts have topped the complaints list. Since the ombudsman ruled in January that the Nationwide Building Society should pay compensation to an investor who was not told of a better rate of interest being offered by a new account, the office has received a large increase in complaints about old accounts.

Banks attracted an increase of 62 per cent in the number of complaints to 6,327 in the year to the end of September, forcing the office to advertise for extra staff. Laurence Shurman, the banking ombudsman, said complaints about charges and interest rates accounted for one in six of the total.

Michael Barnes, the legal services ombudsman, will produce his first annual report in May. This will cover the year to December 31. He inherited 600 cases from the lay observer and has received many more of his own. Two thirds of complaints were about poor service. The largest area of complaint was house sale and purchase, followed by divorce, property disputes and wills. Mr Barnes makes recommendations. If a firm refuses to pay, Mr Barnes can require it to place an advertisement explaining the recommendation and its decision. The building societies ombudsman can also require societies to advertise in specified newspapers if they do not agree to an award.

The ombudsman schemes all require customers to ex-

haust the internal complaints procedures before they are passed on for impartial examination. Because of this, the complaints that go on to the ombudsmen's offices are a small proportion of the total.

The banking, building societies and insurance ombudsmen all find for customers in a third of cases and support the financial organisations in two thirds of cases.

Only Richard Youard, the investment referee, has seen a fall in the number of cases handled. His year also ends on Tuesday and his office says it expects to see a slight reduction in its caseload. It deals with complaints about members of the Investment Management Regulatory Organisation. Most involve complaints about portfolio management. In 1990 he handled 134 cases and awarded £85,000.

David Quayle, the ombudsman for corporate estate

agents, started adjudicating on complaints in September 1990, and at the end of his first year reported he had received 1,236 complaints. More than half related to estate agents who had not joined the scheme. The highest award was more than £15,000.

Michael Platt, the pensions ombudsman, began taking complaints at the beginning of last April. His first year also ends on Tuesday, by when he will have received more than 1,900 complaints. He deals with company and personal pensions, where the provider is not a member of the insurance ombudsman's scheme, but not with state pensions. There is no limit on the restitution he can award. The leading complaint is on transfer values and delays in information, said his office. Mr Youard, Dr Farrand, Mr Shurman, Mr Edell and Mrs Woodhead are limited to making awards of £100,000



Simple system: Jane Woodhead, ombudsman

per case, although they can recommend higher payouts.

Dr Farrand recommended one person should receive £550,000 last year, in the case of a woman who had died eight years after taking out term insurance. The company at first suspected she was not dead, but paid out on Dr Farrand's recommendation. In total he recommended £5 million payouts.

The insurance ombudsman was the first to be set up in 1981, when leading insurance companies started the scheme. They had hoped that it would show there was no need for an ombudsman, and could be disbanded after two years. Instead it has provided the model for a growing number of schemes.

Addresses: □ The Insurance Ombudsman Bureau, City Gate One, 135 Park Street, London SE1 9EA; □ The Office of the Banking Ombudsman, Citadel House, 5/11 Fetter Lane, London EC4A 1BR; □ The Office of the Building Societies Ombudsman, 35-37 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1X 7AW; □ The Ombudsman for Corporate Estate Agents, PO Box 1114, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 1YQ; □ Pensions Ombudsman, 11 Belgrave Road, London SW1V 1RB; □ Investment Referee, 6 Frederick Place, London EC2R 8BT.



David Quayle
Estate agents

Julian Farrand
Insurance

Stephen Edell
Building societies

Michael Platt
Pensions

Richard Youard
Investment

Laurence Shurman
Banks

Salesmen put on the spot

DISPUTES over sales pitch are being examined by the insurance ombudsman at informal hearings in an attempt to determine what salesmen have actually said in selling a policy.

Last year, 38 out of a total of 45 hearings involved disputes over life policies, and 18 resulted in Dr Julian Farrand making awards for the claimants.

Most involved tied and appointed representatives of life companies, and the number is expected to double this year as complaints about this sector increase. In 1991, 809 of the 2,839 cases resolved by the ombudsman involved life insurance. This compared with 510 in 1990.

The hearings speed up cases allowing factual disputes about the point of sale to be explored in two hours rather than in a series of letters.

In one case, the ombudsman found for an investor who was sold a unit-linked whole life policy at the age of 18 when he wanted a savings plan. When, at the age of 21, he asked for his money back, he found there was no surrender value.

The financial planner completed before the sale had indicated savings for

"nice house, nice holidays". The salesman told the ombudsman's bureau that he had explained the nature of the policy, which was called a financial security account plan, and that the customer was happy. He later admitted that at the time of the sale he had been trained on only two products and had not therefore recommended a more appropriate capital accumulation plan.

Dr Farrand said the most common complaint at informal hearings and in letters from dissatisfied investors was: "I was told that it was the same as a building society account, only better."

He has already handled several cases involving with-profits bonds wrongly sold as short-term investments. Last week, the Life Assurance and Unit Trust Regulatory Organisation ordered life companies selling these bonds to submit all marketing material so that it could check that investors were not being misled about them.

When an independent intermediary signed surrender forms for policyholders without their permission, and the insurance company paid out on the strength of the fraudulent signatures, the true policyholders had to take their claims to the ombudsman. The com-

pany argued that acting upon "apparently genuine signatures was neither negligent nor inconsistent with good insurance practice". The policies, therefore, had to be reinstated.

Another case involves a fraudulent intermediary who forged schedules connected to a real policy to convince an investor that he had put thousands of pounds into an investment bond on his behalf. Dr Farrand recommended a compromise solution. He thought that the insurance company and the investor should share the loss equally. In other words, the company should pay half the missing money. Dr Farrand made a non-binding recommendation, and although "far from comfortable" the life company made ex gratia payments to the investor and several others.

Complaints about life policies were resolved in favour of the policyholders more frequently than for general insurance claims. The average overall was a 32 per cent success rate for customers. Six companies had 100 or more complaints against them dealt with by the ombudsman. The largest number against one company was 203, but the ombudsman found in favour of only a total of 33 of the policyholders.

Valuations fair game

A HIGH Court ruling against four building societies should give some homebuyers the right to take complaints about valuations to the building societies ombudsman.

Mr Justice Morritt ruled against the Halifax, the Woolwich, the Leeds Permanent and the Alliance & Leicester building societies in a friendly action between them and the ombudsman's office representing eight homebuyers.

The societies will soon decide whether to appeal against the decision that would open the way for the ombudsman's office to deal with valuation complaints for the first time in its five-year history.

The ruling will only help homebuyers who are existing borrowers of a society when a staff valuer carries out the valuation of a property. Valuations have accounted for a substantial number of the complaints to the ombudsman, but until now the office has not been able to handle them.

The valuation, which can cost as little as £45, is intended to tell the lender that the property is adequate security for the loan. Borrowers are advised to pay for more detailed investigations of the property in the form of a full structural survey or a homebuyer's report.

The only recourse for the more than 90 per cent of homebuyers who rely totally on the building societies' valuation and for those who use building society surveyors for the more expensive reports has been to sue the society or valuer. Where severe loss had occurred, some buyers have taken this action and had to wait years for the outcome of their cases.

The first victory for a homebuyer who relied solely on a valuation was in the Yanni case in 1981. Since then there have been a few more, but the cost puts most people off.

Now a simple, quick and free adjudication system should be available to some borrowers who feel that major defects were missed, or that

wrong valuations have caused problems with buildings insurance, or other difficulties.

Mr Justice Morritt said that the Building Societies Act 1986 gave an individual the right to have a complaint investigated by the ombudsman.

However, the ruling would still leave new customers of a society and those of societies who use outside valuers unable to pursue a claim with Stephen Edell or Jane Woodhead, the building society ombudsmen.

The Building Societies Association has been in talks with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors to urge it to set up an ombudsman's scheme for valuers. This could then cover all valuations, homebuyer's reports and structural surveys.

Last year the ombudsman added banking services, trusteeships and executorships to the cases that could be dealt with. When the office was being set up in 1987, none of the building societies offered bank accounts.

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Co-op sets pace with anti-fraud cheques

BY LIZ DOLAN

THE Co-operative Bank has become the first high street bank to respond to new legislation designed to prevent cheque fraud. From next month, all Co-op customers will receive special cheques which will be crossed "Account Payee" as standard. In addition, the words "or order" on the payee line have been replaced by "only".

This wording rules out people receiving cheques and then cashing them through someone else's account by signing the back. This device has been used by people without bank accounts, but has also caused problems with the fraudulent cashing of cheques.

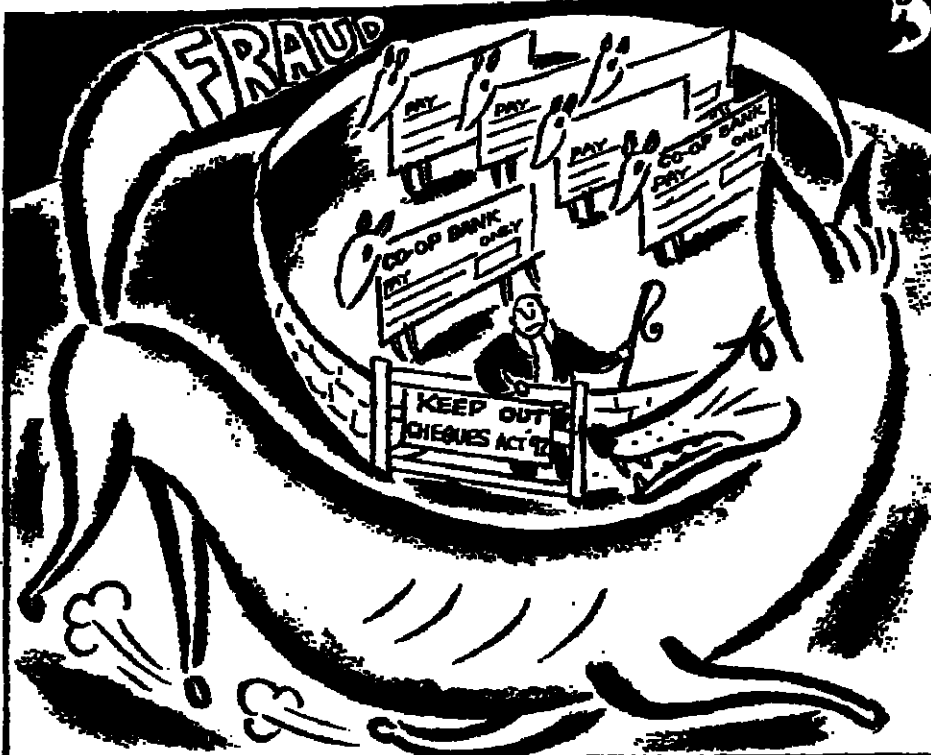
By mid-summer, standard cheques sent to Lloyds' customers will also carry the words "account payee" and "only". However, old-style cheque books will continue to be available on request for people who still wish to allow third-party endorsement.

The 1992 Cheque Act, which was rushed through

Parliament on the last day of the recent session, gives legal status to both phrases, although it says the word "only" should suffice.

Barclays said: "We welcome the act and will definitely be offering customers 'account payee' cheques. We don't quite know when, because we're undecided about quite how to do it. Do we offer a straight choice, make one option available only on request, or send every-one cheques with the new wording on them? For some people it will be very inconvenient if cheques cannot be endorsed to third parties." Customers were already being encouraged to write "account payee" manually on cheques, a spokeswoman said. The new cheques would be available in three or four months, she added.

National Westminster said it was sending guidelines to branches on how to advise customers, but it had not yet decided what to do about the wording on cheques. A spokesman said: "We are



conscious that some of our customers want third party endorsement facilities."

He said that NatWest would have made a final decision and communicated it to all customers well before June 16, when the act comes into force.

NatWest was "right behind" the act, he added, because it clarified the legal position about cheque wording. "It used to be like Sunday trading, where no one really knew what the law was."

The Royal Bank of Scotland said new-style cheques would certainly be available at some point, but "we are still looking at a wide range of scenarios and working out the best policy. There would

be a few difficulties if we abolished the present style of cheque. For instance, when my children receive cheques, they have to pay them into my account."

The Co-op's new cheques will also carry intricate lines and a complex mix of security inks intended to make life difficult for forgers.

Last year, £2 million was lost by people whose cheques were stolen in the post and subsequently fraudulently endorsed to a third party, according to Derek Harper, manager of the British Banking Association's fraud intelligence unit. The unit was set up a year ago in response to a series of cheque frauds in the previous year, involving the

Inland Revenue. Cheques on their way to the Revenue were stolen by casual Post Office sorting workers, and nearly £2 million was cashed or paid fraudulently into bank accounts.

Other sufferers included Access (whose name was changed to, among others, Total Success) and W H Smith, whose name was perfect for any thief passing himself off as Bill Smith.

Mr Harper said the new-style cheques would make life difficult for the black economy. "The plan was never to stop people trying to avoid tax, but local tradesmen may soon find it difficult to cash customers' cheques with a tame publican."

Fixed-rate deals still available at under 10%

BY SARA MCCONNELL

FIXED-rate mortgage deals edged below 10 per cent again this week with several fixed terms of ten years on offer.

This follows announcements last week by several lenders, including the Halifax and Abbey National, that they were withdrawing lower fixed rates and reissuing of-

fers at higher rates, nudging 11 per cent.

John Charcol, the mortgage broker, is offering a rate of 9.95 per cent (an annual percentage rate of 12 per cent) fixed for ten years. The broker says that funds are being provided by a top-ten building society.

Funds at the fixed rate will be offered for mortgages and remortgages on repayment, pension and endowment or on an interest-only basis. There is a redemption penalty of three months' interest during the fixed-rate term, and a lender's fee of 0.75 per cent.

Offering a fixed rate of 9.99 per cent (APR 12 per cent) for ten years is Miers Mortgage & Insurance Services, the Shipley, West Yorkshire, broker. It is available for mortgages and remortgages, as a repayment or interest-only mortgage. There is an arrangement fee of 1 per cent.

Equity & Law Home Loans has launched a ten-year fixed-rate mortgage at 9.95 per cent (APR 10.9 per cent) as part of its premier mortgage range. Those who cannot show proof of income will pay 10.95 per cent (APR 11.7 per cent) and will only be lent up to 60 per cent of the property's value.

Above the 10 per cent mark, Cheltenham & Gloucester is offering a rate of 10.6 per cent (APR 11.4 per cent) fixed for five years. The society has pledged that it will guarantee a mortgage offer by April 9, polling day, to anyone who gets an application in by April 1.

The election has also prompted an offer of an "election-proof" cap and collar mortgage from the Leeds Permanent. The two-year deal has an initial capped rate of 10.75 per cent (APR 12 per cent) but guarantees to follow any basic rate cuts down to 9.75 per cent.

WOMEN may have burned their bras back in the Sixties, but it has taken 30 years for them to get their hands on the financial trousers traditionally worn by the men in their lives.

The day-to-day family financial budget has always been mainly organised by women. In fact, the less money available, the more likely the woman was to hold the purse strings.

But recent research shows them having more say on a broad range of money matters. According to the Henley Centre for Forecasting, a significant number of female partners are taking responsibility for matters such as insurance and mortgages. A high proportion shares the decision-making.

Some 66 per cent of the women interviewed claimed joint responsibility for arranging life insurance, and 18 per cent claimed sole responsibility. Sixty per cent said they were jointly responsible for home and contents insurance – 17 per cent were solely responsible – and 34 per cent played a part in decision-making when it came to the ultimate male bastion, insuring the car. Sole responsibility was claimed by 21 per cent.

The area where fewest women had sole responsibility was organising the mortgage, only 5 per cent, but 75 per cent shared responsibility. Peter Mills, Henley financial services expert, pointed out that even those areas where women appeared to have the least say showed a marked improvement over the traditional picture.

Mintel, the market research analyst, is another organisation that has picked up on the financial revolution. Its report on *Women and Finance*, published late last year, devised an "influence index" to indicate how much say women had in a couple's choice of financial products.

Over something like the choice of a store card, women had a score of 80 out of 100 on the influence index, falling to 51 on endowment policies, 43 on stocks and shares and 41 on pensions.

Mintel's survey also showed that the women most likely to leave long-term financial decisions to men were older, married women at the upper end of the social and economic scale.

Mr Mills believes it is among younger women that the biggest shift in the balance of financial decision-making can be seen. These women are more likely to live independently of their parents before living with a partner, and are unlikely to relinquish financial independence.

A woman is more likely to keep her own bank account, and perhaps have a second joint account with her partner. She may also come into a relationship already equipped with her own pension and life assurance, which she may not want to give up – in case the relationship fails – or where financial penalties may make it inadvisable to do so.

Mr Mills says a knock-on effect is the targeting of potential women customers by certain sectors of the financial services market – such as debit card providers – and a move away from the advertising image of the man as breadwinner and sole provider.

He adds: "You will see more and more women earning more than men, which means that when the financial services industry is writing literature it can't afford to make broad assumptions about who it's writing for."

Adam Lury, of Howell Henry Chaldecott Lury, the advertising agency, points to advertisements from insurance companies such as the Prudential. "You had this young couple where the man

kept on going on that they wanted to be together" while the women was all for running off and taking a yacht around the world. It's certainly a move away from the idyllic couple."

The adult male market had also reached saturation point. "All men have been contacted at one time or another by at least one financial services organisation," Mr Mills says. "They need to augment existing business. Traditionally they've looked at younger adults, particularly in terms of things like the current account market."

However, the number of young adults is set to decline. In 1991 there were 4.5 million adults aged 20 to 24. By 1999, this is expected to drop to 3.4 million.

By contrast, women are taking a greater role in the job market and are working their way further up the career ladder. By 1994, half of all graduates should be women which will lead, in the longer term, to a better balance between men and women in management.

Significant numbers of women work in service industries which tend to have smaller work units, such as a restaurant with a dozen employees, as opposed to a factory employing hundreds or even thousands, which in turn allows women to become bigger fish in smaller ponds. "A woman in that sort of job is going to have her own perceptions about her ability to make decisions, and this will spill over from the workplace," Mr Mills says.

Women also seemed to have the edge when it came to making financial decisions without their partners realising they have done so. When the Henley Centre asked female partners if they shared responsibility for arranging life insurance, 66 per cent said they did. But when the male halves of couples were asked the same question, only 48 per cent said the decision was shared.

This difference of opinion was also present in other areas of financial planning.

"Some men may not even realise they are no longer solely responsible for financial decision-making – or they may simply choose not to admit it," Mr Mills says.

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The indexed rise for calculating the indexation allowance on assets disposed of in February 1992.

Month purchased	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
January	—	0.650	0.569	0.494	0.416	0.363
February	—	0.643	0.563	0.483	0.411	0.358
March	0.716	0.640	0.558	0.469	0.409	0.355
April	0.682	0.617	0.538	0.438	0.396	0.339
May	0.670	0.610	0.532	0.432	0.393	0.338
June	0.665	0.607	0.528	0.428	0.384	0.336
July	0.665	0.598	0.530	0.431	0.386	0.339
August	0.664	0.591	0.516	0.427	0.383	0.335
September	0.665	0.584	0.513	0.428	0.387	0.331
October	0.657	0.578	0.503	0.426	0.384	0.325
November	0.649	0.573	0.499	0.421	0.373	0.318
December	0.652	0.569	0.500	0.419	0.368	0.319
1988	—	—	—	—	—	—
January	—	0.319	0.228	0.141	0.047	0.005
February	—	0.314	0.219	0.134	0.041	—
March	—	0.309	0.214	0.123	0.037	—
April	—	0.288	0.192	0.080	0.024	—
May	—	0.283	0.185	0.080	0.021	—
June	—	0.279	0.181	0.076	0.018	—
July	—	0.277	0.180	0.075	0.019	—
August	—	0.283	0.177	0.064	0.016	—
September	—	0.257	0.169	0.054	0.013	—
October	—	0.245	0.160	0.046	0.009	—
November	—	0.239	0.150	0.048	0.005	—
December	—	0.236	0.147	0.049	0.004	—

The RI month for disposals by individuals on or after April 6, 1985 (April 1, 1985 for companies) is the month in which the allowable expenditure was incurred, or March 1982 where the expenditure was incurred before that month.

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Ernie hangs on to the secret of a sure win

BY SARA MCCONNELL

FORGET the Lost Ark of the Covenant, the Turin Shroud and the last moments of the Romanovs. The great mystery of our time is "How to win the Premium Bonds". Frustrated bondholders feel that there must be a scientific way of working out a fool-proof winning strategy. Assurances from National Savings that premium bond numbers are randomly generated and that every bond has an equal chance of winning are treated with dark suspicion.

So advertisements like the one that appeared regularly in *Exchange and Mart* at the end of last year — "Can I help you win the premium bonds? There is a secret. For details, KJ Ellis" — appear to offer the key to scientifically generated riches.

Those sending off a stamped addressed envelope will receive a typewritten sheet from Mr Ellis who promises: "In my book *Can I help you win the premium bonds?* you will learn: that if you hold bonds you may already have won and not know it! that you do not need to hold anywhere near the maximum number to get good odds of [sic] winning! that one day's difference when purchasing may make all the difference!"

Unfortunately for Mr Ellis and any eager disciples, National Savings dismisses Mr Ellis's analysis of the premium bond scheme as "simplistic and partial". It goes on: "With randomly generated numbers you cannot apply this calculation to an individual holding and expect it to work."

"We cannot endorse the



'Misled': Richard Kidd registered complaint

recommendations in this booklet."

Mr Ellis said his method was one theory. He has won 23 times over the past three to five years using his system, bringing him more than £1,000. He does not claim that he has found a way to beat the random system. The secret of Mr Ellis's method is only revealed to those sending him £12 for the complete book, which is typewritten and home-bound. The book says the chances of winning will be enhanced by buying "an optimum holding".

National Savings said that even those who invest the maximum £10,000 in bonds could spend years waiting to win the maximum £250,000 monthly prize but the chance against winning no monthly prize at all in a year is 55,000 to one. The prizes, though, are more likely to be of £50 or

£100 rather than the Big One. The more bonds people hold, the more likely they are to win a prize.

Mr Ellis says, however, that anyone buying more than 1,700 bonds is not getting value for money. Buying 1,700 bonds will give the maximum return on the investment and achieve better odds than with the maximum 10,000 bonds, giving odds of 6.47:1 on winning a prize, he claims.

To recover the 6.5 per cent of the bond fund that is paid into the central prize fund, by winning regular prizes, becomes progressively more difficult. It is too statistically unlikely on holdings of more than 1,700 bonds to make it worth buying larger numbers of bonds in the first place, the book says. Mr Ellis calculates that the return needed to cover the amount paid into the

prize fund on a holding of 1,700 bonds would be a prize of £50 a month, statistically the most likely prize to win. This will disappoint readers who were hoping to have the secrets of winning the £250,000 prize explained.

Encouraging people to buy fewer premium bonds might not please National Savings. But the advertisement in *Exchange and Mart* also attracted the attention of Richard Kidd, of Andover, Hampshire, who considered it to be misleading because it implied to him that there was a way of beating the random number selection process of premium bonds.

After being told that the advertisement was not covered by the Advertising Standards Authority's terms of reference, Mr Kidd referred the advertisement to his local trading standards office in Basingstoke.

Chris Smith, assistant county trading standards officer, Hampshire, said the complaint was still under investigation. However, the original advertisement did not appear to contravene existing trading standards legislation, he said. Much of the information in Mr Ellis's book was already public knowledge or contained in National Savings' own literature, so people should ask whether it was worth paying £12 for the book, he added.

"The standard advice we would give to people in these cases is 'Do not part with your money unless you are prepared to lose it. If you do send money, carry out checks on people first.' In Mr Ellis's case this could be difficult as he is ex-directory and none of his literature carried a telephone or fax number."

ECU offers a home loan hedge

BY SARA MCCONNELL

FOREIGN currency mortgage holders whose funds are managed by ECU Group received a letter this week offering them the option of taking out currency futures contracts to protect them against any sudden drop in the value of the pound after the election.

Borrowers choosing the futures contract option will have to put up deposits of 10 per cent of their loans. If the pound moves up against the currency in which the futures are held, borrowers could stand to lose their whole deposit. Some clients might be asked for more money to cover losses.

The availability of the futures contract is a one-off during the period of uncertainty before and after the election, the group said.

Clients' funds have been held in Swiss francs since

February and will, for the most part, continue to be, the group said. However, borrowers who want to avoid exposure to falls in the pound's value that would increase the size of their loans are being told to move their money into sterling temporarily until the election is over.

It tells its 700 clients that the alternative, "and in our opinion, the more favourable option, [is to] create an exposure in currencies which are trending up against the pound and which are likely, therefore, to benefit more from a sudden decline in the pound's fortunes. This exposure can be created for you via the derivative markets on the international monetary market through our sister company, ECU Futures plc."

Michael Petley, ECU

Group's managing director, said currency futures contracts, probably dollar futures, would be traded on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. These contracts can be traded at any time until the end of June. The number of contracts taken out will depend on the size of the loan, which would remain in Swiss francs.

If sterling falls against the dollar, the value of the contracts will increase; if, on the other hand, sterling moves up against the dollar, their value will fall. Both rises and falls could be substantial, depending on the size of the loan.

Mr Petley said: "If sterling goes up against the dollar, the borrower will lose but hopefully he will recover the loss on the Swiss franc debt." If the pound goes up against the Swiss franc, it will benefit the borrower in Swiss francs because his debt will fall.

Clients who have already accepted the risk of taking out foreign currency mortgages should also be able to afford

to take losses if they did decide to use futures, Mr Petley said.

He added: "The sort of client base we have is not a stupid one and their average income is £93,000 a year. Their average loan is £173,000. These people aren't children and they are utterly clear how the market works and what the risks are. It is unlikely that many of our clients will want to do this but we have to be sensitive to our clients' wishes."

Those whose exposure to the futures market is being managed on a discretionary basis by ECU Futures will not have to pay for additional losses if currencies move against them but could lose their 10 per cent deposit. Those who ask the group to deal with them on an execution only or advisory basis could face additional calls for money to cover losses.

Mr Petley said: "If the client is making the decisions, technically he will be open to margin calls."

Pru takes mystique out of managed currency

BY LINDSAY COOK, MONEY EDITOR

PRUDENTIAL has relaunched its Jersey-based managed currency fund, which it has not marketed in Britain since the Financial Services Act was implemented. It now has Securities and Investments Board recognition and Alan Wren, managing director of Prudential Investment products, says: "We believe it's time to take the mystique out of managed currency funds and put them in the investment mainstream."

With a minimum investment of £1,000 and a front-end charge of 5 per cent, the group is marketing it like an authorised unit trust, but Mr Wren says: "Managed currency investment is normally less risky than stock market

investment. Distinct from shares, currencies move in relation to each other and are unlikely to all go down at once."

Investments can be made in capital growth shares or income shares. With the former, the income and capital gains accumulate within the value of the shares and no tax has to be paid until the shares are sold. Income shares pay a dividend every six months. These are subject to tax. Estimated gross yield on the income shares is 8.39 per cent.

The group expects greater interest in the capital growth shares should the election result in a Labour victory, as they will allow higher rate taxpayers to defer tax liability.

The fund uses a pool of 200 banks worldwide, putting money on deposit for between seven days and a year. It is intended as a longer term investment, not a replacement for emergency money in a building society, said Mr Wren.

Fidelity launched its currency funds last year and has attracted about £35 million. Much of that has been invested in the past two weeks.

The Pru plan to follow up the Jersey fund with a Guernsey scheme. Both have the same investor compensation cover as UK funds. The sterling managed roll-up fund does not involve the investor in any taxable income until the money is withdrawn from the fund.

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Simple and instant settlement

Society offers shares deal

BY LIZ DOLAN

A NEW instant share dealing service has been set up by the Norwich and Peterborough Building Society, which was one of the eight special share shops promoted during the BT2 flotation.

The service is available at two branches of Waters Lunniss, the society's own stockbroking firm.

Norwich and Peterborough said the dealing system had been kept as simple as possible, as many small shareholders worried about being faced with complicated stock market procedures when they sold their shares.

Shareholders may take their certificates to the head office of Waters Lunniss in Redwell Street, Norwich, or to the broker's new London office in the building society's branch in High Holborn.

They are then told the current price of the shares and, if acceptable, sign the certificate or, if applicable, fill in the transfer form. The dealer immediately hands over a contract note and a cheque is made payable to the customer. New customers have to give "acceptable evidence of identity".

Customers do not have to be clients of the building soci-

ety. They pay 1.5 per cent commission with a minimum of £22.50. The instant settlement deal is available only on transactions worth up to £5,000. The speed of payment means charges are higher than for the society's other dealing services.

Norwich and Peterborough's normal dealing service, available in all its branches, costs a minimum of £20. Commission of 1.5 per cent is charged on deals up to £7,000.

Ian Ward, the chief general manager of Norwich and Peterborough, said: "Instant settlement is a natural progression as we develop further our share-dealing services." He added that the society planned eventually to extend the instant dealing service to all its building society branches.

The society has also extended its special offer for the sale of BT and 37 other privatisation issues until April 10. This allows anyone to deal in BT shares for £9.50 and in the other shares for 1 per cent commission. The minimum for the other shares is £14.

Families can sell shares in one company for up to four people with the same sur-

name for the same minimum fees.

Norwich and Peterborough was selected by the government as one of eight share shops offering cheap deals when the second tranche of BT was sold last year. The share shops offered an application service and cheap dealing. People who registered to buy BT were given four vouchers for cheap dealing at share shops.

The scheme was first announced in last year's Budget when Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, said he wanted share dealing to be made more widely available in the high street and that he intended to start with BT2.

Banks, building societies and brokers all submitted proposals as to how this could be done and the end result was share shops.

Because the BT share price did not offer instant large profits to buyers, the share shops handled fewer sales than had been expected.

However, in the run up to the election, some privatisation issue holders may now want to sell them. Mr Ward said: "The lead-up to an election usually sees an increase in stock market activity."

Advisers split over rush for inheritance tax planning

BY HELEN FRIDHAM

SOME insurance companies and financial intermediaries are encouraging people to take swift action before the election to make provision against inheritance tax. Other advisers, however, are arguing that it would be better not to rush into anything.

The current threshold for payment of inheritance tax is £147,000 and the rate at which the tax is paid is 40 per cent of any amount which exceeds that level.

The Budget proposals to increase the threshold by more than the rate of inflation to £150,000 had to be dropped in the rush to get the Finance Act through before Parliament was dissolved. But if re-elected, this is the level that the Conservatives are expected to adopt.

The Labour party is considering the introduction of a recipient-based tax where the

liability would attach to the person who receives the benefit rather than the estate if they win the election. The Liberal Democrats favour a similar system.

This would make the tax more difficult to avoid, though the Labour party has said that the exemption of transfers between spouses and of smaller estates will continue. While each individual might be given an exemption limit, however, the tax is likely to be calculated on the accumulated amount a beneficiary receives during a lifetime.

Financial advisers, such as Towry Law, are therefore urging people to take full advantage of the present tax regime by passing on wealth or setting up trusts as soon as possible.

Clive Scott Hopkins, of Towry Law, argues: "Time



may be short. Any legislation is unlikely to be backdated, but it could apply from the beginning of the tax year (April 6) or following a Labour budget in May or June."

He points out: "If you make gifts now, they become potentially exempt transfers under current rules, which means that if you live for at least seven years no tax will be payable."

"Alternatively, if you still need the income from your

capital, there are a variety of life assurance based trusts that can be used."

London Life is one company that has been promoting its trust schemes through a series of seminars. One is a loan trust scheme where an investor lends money to a trust set up for his or her heirs. The money goes into an investment bond from which the investor can continue to take an "income". But any growth on the capital is for the benefit of the beneficiaries and will, London Life said, be "free of inheritance tax".

Other schemes on offer that are also based on investment bonds include a will trust scheme, which is being marketed by Allied Dunbar, and a half loan, half gift scheme, which is being offered by companies such as Skandia Life.

Some of the snags to be borne in mind with these schemes, however, include the up-front charges, normally at least 5 per cent, which will be deducted from the capital by the insurance company to pay commission to the salesman, and that the investment could go down in value, especially if regular withdrawals are being made. In this case, tax savings on growth could become academic.

Peter Lawson, a solicitor and consultant with McKenna & Co, the City solicitor, also points out that trusts might not give complete protection anyway.

He said: "An assessments (recipient based) tax could tax capital coming out of such trusts at the beneficiary's appropriate rate."

Mr Lawson cautions against rushing into any complicated trust arrangements. "It may be better to wait and see whether Labour intends to tax various types of beneficiaries differently. In Ireland, for example, there are nil rate bands varying from £10,000 to £150,000, according to the relationship to the donor." He agrees, however, that if people can make transfers now, it is wise to do so.

Moira Elms, of Coopers &

Lybrand Deloitte, the accountant, points out: "Before making any transfers to children or grandchildren you should think of your own future needs — whether you will have enough income to live on in your old age without these assets."

Even if the Conservatives are returned to government, the scope for avoiding inheritance tax altogether will be limited for many homeowners whose home is their main asset as property prices, particularly in the South, can exceed £147,000.

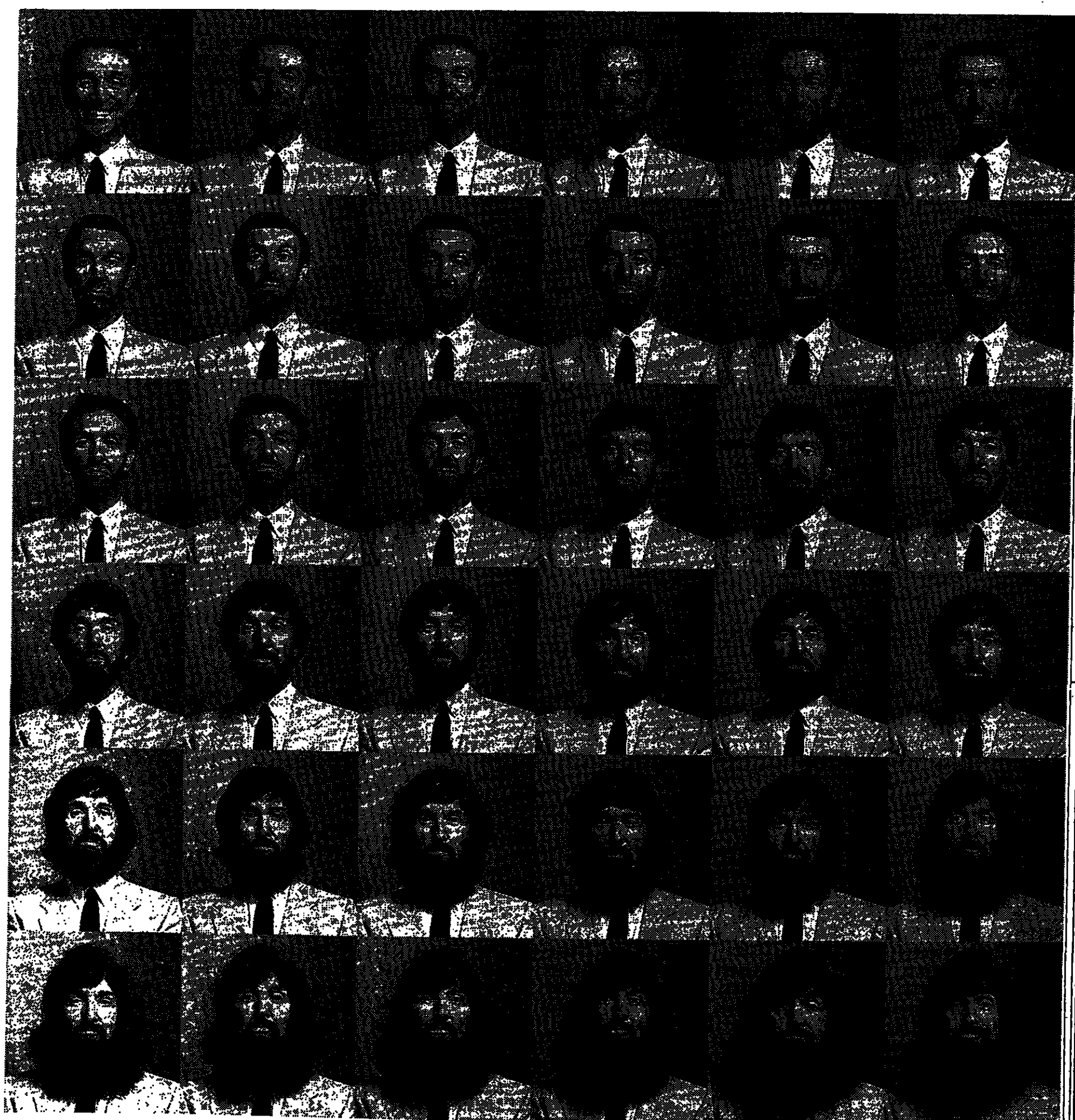
One of the few ways round the problem is for the husband and wife to divide ownership on a tenants-in-common basis, rather than the more usual joint tenants basis, and gift each half separately to their children on their respective deaths. Each can then utilise the £147,000 nil rate band.

But Mrs Elms said: "This can leave the surviving spouse in a difficult position. The children may try to force a sale. And even if they do not want to, unforeseen circumstances can arise, such as a bankruptcy or a divorce which forces a child to realise his or her assets."

The alternative solution is to take out a low cost whole life policy to provide the money so that the heirs can meet the inheritance bill. Currently, such policies can be put in trust so that they are outside the estate.

Mr Lawson points out that under the Irish recipient-based system, such provision is also permitted free of tax. He said: "The proceeds of various types of insurance policy are exempt from tax to the extent that the proceeds are applied in paying 'relevant tax'."

The cost of such a policy will depend on age and the amount of tax to be covered. The heirs of a couple in their sixties with an estate of £200,000, for example, would currently face a potential inheritance bill of just more than £20,000. The cost of a life policy to cover this liability would be about £400 a year.



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Japanese market fidgets on verge of recovery

By Rupert Bruce

THE long-suffering holders of Japanese unit trusts must be wondering if there is any hope. The stock market's blue chip index, the Nikkei average, took yet another fall yesterday and is standing at about half its 1989 peak.

Expert opinion is divided. Joe Williams, a portfolio manager with Morgan Grenfell's Japanese investment management team, confesses to being quite bullish about the immediate future. "I think the market will climb a wall of worry and it will do it from around these levels," he said.

Bruce Seton, who is in charge of Far Eastern investments at Gartmore, is less sure. "It is possible for the market in Japan to go lower. But, just as importantly for the investor, we do not see the market going very much higher. So the opportunity cost is greater," he said. By that he means an investor is forgoing gains in other investments by investing in the Japanese market.

While the Nikkei average rose about 500 in the Eighties, unitholders were well rewarded. According to Mitsui, £100 invested in the average Japanese unit trust over the five years to the end of 1989 would have been worth £308. But £100 in the average trust over the two years to March 16 this year would be worth only £69.

Although there are no compre-



Critical juncture: domestic sentiment is crucial to an upturn on the Tokyo Stock Exchange, which suffered yet another fall this month

hensive figures, anecdotal evidence suggests that savers have remained loyal to their funds and have not sold, in spite of the downturn. The amount of money invested in Schroder Unit Trusts' two original Japan trusts has even increased steadily during the downturn. While £8 million was invested in the company's trusts in the last three months of 1989, almost £32 million was invested during the corresponding period

in 1991. Indeed, many new investors were made late last year when a number of fund management companies, including Schroder, saw a false dawn in the stock market and launched a clutch of new funds.

But the double whammy, which hit the stock market in 1989 as it became apparent that Japan's economy would slow and perhaps even experience a short recession, is still evident. In general, the

stock market has fallen with the profits outlook for companies, but stocks have also tumbled from their very high prices paid for them in the Eighties.

This month's rumbles were precipitated by profits warnings from companies such as Sony, which said it would make a loss this year, and the absence of a cut in interest rates that had been expected.

Martin Paling, chief investment strategist at James Capel, says the

stock market is at a "critical juncture". While he believes that the economy will begin to recover in the next three months, he adds that the sentiment of domestic investors is crucial. They have been net buyers of shares recently, but only just.

If the government cuts interest rates and brings forward infrastructure spending next week, as analysts hope, that could boost the market. But then, if there is any

truth in speculation about a bankruptcy among one of Japan's stockbrokers, that could send the shares reeling. A further fall in local land values could undermine share prices.

Mr Paling said: "In my view, the market is cheap. But I thought it was cheap when it was 10 per cent higher. There is a fair degree of risk at the moment."

What most do agree on is that Japan's stock market will not give

the same returns in the Nineties as it did in the Eighties. Denis Clough, who manages the Schroder Tokyo Fund, expects more Japanese companies' profits to fall, not just in the financial year which ends on Tuesday, but also next year. There are many technical reasons why more shares are likely to come on to the market and stifle any future rise.

Nor is the market likely to be rescued by share prices simply becoming more expensive compared with companies' earnings once again. Andrew Bell, BZW's director of equity strategy, said: "I think we would regard the bubble ratings as being those of a period of excess. I think the denouement was sufficient for the people involved that people will not push price/earnings ratios up to 60 or 70 times." Mr Bell thinks the Nikkei average could spend the whole decade between 20,000 and 30,000.

Mr Williams thinks blue chips will perform best in the market's initial recovery, but in the longer term he prefers so-called "red chips". He defines these as stocks that are big enough to attract the attentions of a big portfolio manager, yet small enough to grow in one specific business.

"It is a sideways [moving] market," he said. "We, as portfolio managers and analysts, have a huge new challenge to us, which is to pick companies that are going to grow."

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Customers could lose £800 a year if they choose the wrong bank or building society for their interest-bearing current account, a survey by the Northern Rock Building Society shows. The society's current account check, which compares leading bank and building society accounts over the period of a year, said that the amounts of interest on a balance of £30,000 could be as low as £1,554 or as high as £2,362. High payers include the Chelsea, Halifax and Northern Rock building societies, while low payers include First Direct, TSB and Lloyds Bank. A couple with a monthly credit balance of £1,000 and an authorised overdraft could earn interest of £25 over 12 months with a

top paying institution or face paying out £90 with a low paying one. High payers are the Halifax, the Woolwich and First Direct while Lloyds, Barclays and the Bank of Scotland are at the bottom.

□ The Scarborough Building Society is launching an "election special" investment account that guarantees a fixed rate of 11.5 per cent gross, 8.625 per cent net, until August 1 1992. There is a minimum investment of £1,000 and a maximum of £250,000. When the fixed period ends, the account will become an instant access account paying the same rate of interest as the Super Saver.

□ Woolwich Life is offering a guaranteed income account that will pay guaranteed regular monthly income over a three-year term. The minimum investment is £500 with no maximum. There are two income rates offering 7.5 per cent net for investments between £5,000 and £14,999 and 7.8 per cent net for investments above £15,000. At the end of the three-year term, the original investment is returned in full.

□ Midland Bank is abolishing its lower band of interest of 1.5 per cent on Orchard accounts with balances of less than £500. It will pay the top rate of 3 per cent gross, 2.25 per cent net, on all balances from April 21. The monthly fee for agreed overdrafts will go up from £5 to £7 and for other overdrafts from £10 to £15.

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Definitions (i) "Investor" means the individual named in the Application Form as the Applicant. (ii) "Plan" means the INVESCO MIM Management Ltd. General Personal Equity Plan (PEP) taken out by the Investor and references to the Plan shall apply to all Plans established in accordance with these Terms and Conditions, separately. (iii) "Plan Manager" means INVESCO MIM Management Ltd, which has been approved by the Commissioners of the Inland Revenue to act as a plan manager and which is a member of the Investment Management Regulatory Organisation (IMRO) and as such the conduct of its investment business is regulated by IMRO. (iv) "Regulations" means the Personal Equity Plan Regulations issued by H.M. Treasury as amended from time to time. (v) "Tax Year" means the tax year from 6th April one year to 5th April in the next. (vi) "Associated Company" means any holding company of the Plan Manager or a subsidiary of any such holding company (as such terms are defined in the Companies Act 1985).

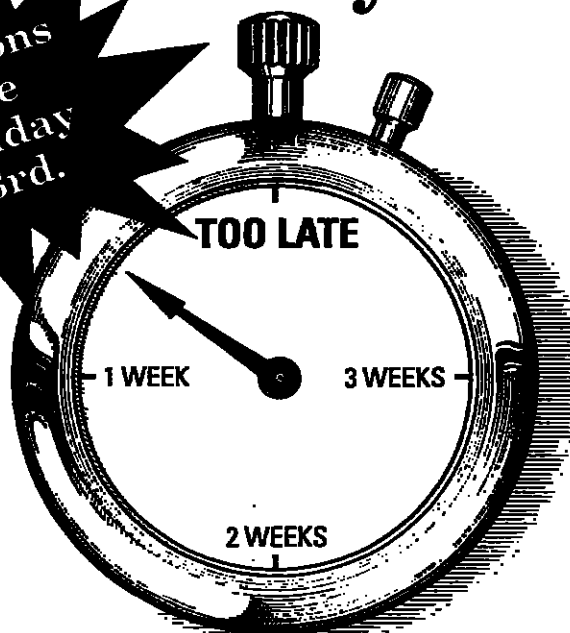
2. General (i) INVESCO MIM Management Ltd. shall act as Plan Manager for the Investor in order to provide the benefits of a Personal Equity Plan in accordance with the Regulations and subject to these Terms and Conditions. (ii) Investors may invest in one general PEP per Tax Year and by completing the application warrant that they do so with their own cash. (iii) Investors will not receive unsolicited calls from the Plan Manager. (iv) Applications will be acknowledged in writing by the Plan Manager. (v) The Plan Manager reserves the right from time to time to amend the Terms and Conditions providing any amendment does not result in the Plan ceasing to qualify under the Regulations. The Plan Manager will notify the Investor in writing of any such changes at least 14 days prior to any changes taking effect. (vi) The Plan Manager is an authorised person under the Financial Services Act 1986. Details of compensation rights can be obtained from the Plan Manager's Compliance Officer or direct from the Securities and Investments Board. Any complaints should be referred, in writing, to the Head of Investor Services, INVESCO MIM Management Ltd., for investigation. Investors also have the right to complain directly to IMRO or the Investment Regulator.

3. Investment (i) Investment in the Plan may be made with cash or cheques only. (ii) The Plan Manager will, where relevant, be entitled, without prior disclosure or reference to the Investor, to effect or arrange investments in which it, or an Associated Company may have underwritten, managed, or arranged an issue or offer for sale during the previous twelve months. (iii) Distributions of income received within the Plan together with the appropriate tax credits and any interest arising from cash balances will be retained within the Plan unless otherwise agreed with the Investor. (iv) Actual yields could vary from estimates due to changes in the amounts and timing of company dividends. Any initial yield should be regarded as an indication only. Income distributions on income paying PEPs will normally be made twice yearly on dates to be notified by the Plan Manager. Payment is expected to be within one month of the relevant distribution date and may be subject to a minimum level of income available for distribution. The minimum figure is £10 (subject to change). (v) All investments held under the Plan will be held in the name of a designated nominee who will normally be an Associated Company. The Plan Manager will only accept liability for the negligence or default of third parties where they are Associated Companies. (vi) The Investor will be the beneficial owner of all investments held within the Plan. Documents evidencing title will be held by, or on behalf of, the Plan Manager. (vii) The Plan Manager shall not be responsible for losses unless due to its negligence or wilful default.

4. Management (i) Funding investment or reinvestment, cash will be held in a Client Bank Account with the Royal Bank of Scotland Plc for such other bank as the Plan Manager may from time to time nominate. Any cash held in the Plan will attract interest. (ii) Investors will be given an asset valuation and a statement of transactions as at the 5th April and 5th October or at such other dates as may be determined by the Plan Manager, in each case within twenty-five business days from the reporting date. Reports are not expected to include a measure of performance but, annually will contain a statement of the reasons for the purchases, sales and holding of investments. (iii) The Plan Manager will, if requested in writing, supply to the investor copies of entries in its books relating to the Investor and may make a charge for this service. (iv) Investments will not be lost by the Plan Manager to a third party. The Plan Manager will not commit the Investor to any underwriting or borrow on his behalf. (v) The Investor hereby warrants that he/she is and will remain the sole, unencumbered, beneficial owner of the assets held under the Plan. (vi) If the tax-free element of the scheme is withdrawn, the Plan will continue to be managed by the Plan Manager. New Terms and Conditions will be sent to investors. (vii) Management fees may be supplemented but will not be based by any other remuneration receivable by the Plan Manager in connection with transactions effected by the Plan Manager with or for the Investor under this or any other agreement. (viii) The Plan Manager may provide the Inland Revenue

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Signature _____ Date _____

Where the winning way becomes the only way

Driving towards Millwall's training ground to say farewell to the players after resigning, I wondered and wondered about one thing. What to tell Mike McCarthy, my success. If he asked for any advice.

After thinking it over, the only conclusion was to say: "Win matches." Football management is all about winning. People judge managers by their results and those judgments tend to be black and white—success or failure. This means we are typecast—as miracle workers and geniuses or villains. You can go from hero to villain within a season.

At Millwall, I took over a club that had gone 20 games without a win as it was relegated from the first division. In my first season in charge we reached the second divi-

sion promotion play-offs. In the summer, I sold Teddy Sheringham, our best player, for £3 million. When I left two weeks ago we were mid-table, and I had sold £4 million worth of players in 18 months, spending only £1.5 million and reducing costs.

At Middlesbrough, my previous club, we had a five-year plan to move from the third to the first division. We made the first after two years—because not enough money was available to strengthen the team—and I was dismissed in year four when we reached a cup final (the Zenith Data Systems) for the first time in the club's history.

If you succeed one season, the expectations the next are great. If your club needs to sell to survive, it is hard to fulfil them. One of my big-



Bruce Rioch, who resigned as the manager of Millwall last week, offers an insight into the hard times and great expectations that come with being in charge of a football club

gest regrets at Millwall is that Terry Hurlock had to be sold to Rangers.

Since then, the recession has ensured a slow transfer market, meaning it has become hard to sell the players you want to offload. That can lead to discontent among those out of the first team. If someone is on £300,000 a year and is not selected, he and his wife, if he is married, are likely to be unhappy. Everybody wants to be liked and respected but there can be only 11 players in the team.

The attraction of the manager's job is the challenge.

In one day you can be a Marie Proops to players—bearing how they have got a gig pregnant, been arrested for drink driving, or cannot sell their house—spend a couple of hours on the training field, deal with press enquiries, talk about finance to directors, and get through some paperwork.

Then you jump into your car and go watch a match featuring future opponents or a player who interests you. In the past year, working for a London club, I've driven approximately 40,000 miles, but at Mid-

dlesbrough, it was nearer 60,000. At home, the manager watch videos of matches to gain ideas.

Fortunately, my family put up with it. I have a firm home life with my wife, Jane, and our two sons. The younger, Gregor, is 16 and an apprentice at Millwall. My resignation has been difficult for him.

Public life brings public criticism. I was not in the habit of listening to Danny Baker (the Radio 5 presenter, who happens to be a Millwall supporter and who often used his programme

on Saturday evenings to criticise Rioch). I once tuned in to him—but switched straight off.

Every manager experiences criticism from crowds at some time, but there can also be genuine affection. The ovation I received from the Middlesbrough crowd when I went back there with Millwall was probably the most satisfying moment of my managerial career.

But you do not resign as I did just because the supporters are on your back. I had been thinking about leaving Millwall for about four weeks. A 6-1 defeat at Portsmouth brought things to a head and I made the decision during a long Saturday night/Sunday morning. After going out for a meal with Jane and my brother on the Saturday night, I spent much of the

BRUCE RIOCH

Born: September 8, 1947, Aldershot.
Age: 44. Married with two sons.
LEAGUE CAREER: 1969-70: Luton Town, 157 appearances, 52 goals. 1970-71: Luton Town, 177, 47 goals. 1971-72: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1972-73: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1973-74: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1974-75: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1975-76: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1976-77: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1977-78: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1978-79: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1979-80: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1980-81: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1981-82: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1982-83: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1983-84: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1984-85: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1985-86: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1986-87: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1987-88: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1988-89: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1989-90: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1990-91: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1991-92: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1992-93: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1993-94: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1994-95: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 1995-96: Luton Town, 125, 46 goals. 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SATURDAY MARCH 28 1992

Premier League's offer falls short

Players' strike over TV deal looks inevitable

BY PETER BALL

A PLAYERS' strike against football's Premier League seems almost inevitable. The first division clubs yesterday threw down the gauntlet at their meeting at Lancaster Gate, offering only half the share of television money the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) was seeking.

The PFA had asked for ten per cent of the income from the television contract, in line with its entitlement under the agreement with the Football League. The Premier League responded yesterday by offering five per cent, with a guaranteed minimum of £1 million. They also agreed to maintain the players' pension rights, and offered the PFA a place on a consultative committee of the game's chief executives.

"We have made a very fair, very reasonable offer," Sir John Quinton, chairman of the Premier League, said yesterday. "And the Premier League believes there is no justifiable basis for industrial action. A strike would be totally unnecessary, and a very sad day for football."

Gordon Taylor, the chief executive of the PFA, rejected the Premier League's offer almost out of hand. "It will not meet our requirements," Taylor told Quinton after the three-hour meeting.

"It has now become clear that power lies with the first division chairmen, and they want to use it for confrontation," Taylor said. "We negotiated in good faith with Rick Parry and the League's officers, but they go away with an agreement and the 22 chairmen tear it up. I thought we had an agreement for a guarantee of £1.5 million, but we now seem to be going backwards."

The strike ballot of the 594 first division players closes on April 3, with a result to be announced four days later. Initially, at least, the players are expected to refuse to play in televised games, and the first match to be effected is likely to be the Rumbelows Cup final between Manchester United and Nottingham Forest on April 12.

Taylor kept the door to a last-minute settlement ajar by asking for a meeting next week with Quinton, but the Barclays chairman left no doubt that the Premier League's offer was non-negotiable. "We have put forward a proposal which is our bottom line," he said.

The players may take some convincing, and the Premier League has already drawn up contingency plans if the strike does go ahead. That may involve a recourse to legal action, particularly if the hawks among the first division chairmen have their way.

"We have legal opinion that there is no legal basis for an industrial dispute at the present time," Quinton said. Those who believe lawyers are the only ones to benefit from court action will be unsurprised to learn the PFA's legal advisers do not concur.

In real terms, the Premier League's offer represents a sizeable increase. The PFA at present receives approximately £700,000 from their Football League contract, of which the first division clubs contribute around £500,000, but with the clubs expected to reap rich benefits from the breakaway league, the players are understandably reluctant to see their percentage reduced so dramatically.

With Aldershot closing down this week, and the fear that others may follow, the PFA's role in providing financial support for clubs, which saved Bristol City, Middlesbrough and Wolverhampton Wanderers, among others, in the 1980s, is likely to become increasingly important when the Premier League starts to cream off the Football League income. The money is also used to support education and welfare funds, and the successful Football in the Community and youth training programmes.

Predictably, the Football Association supported the Premier League. "I am astounded that action of this sort is being contemplated when I've heard from the meeting that a very fair offer has been made," Graham Kelly, the FA's chief executive, said. The clubs hope supporters will back them, but in that they may be disappointed.

Photograph, page 37
Rick's view, page 37

S Africa welcomes 'raining champs'

FROM GAVIN BELL IN JOHANNESBURG

IT MATTERED little to South African cricket followers that rain and silly rules bowled their team out of the World Cup, judging by the tumultuous reception they gave to the squad on its return from Australia yesterday.

Unprecedented scenes of jubilation greeted the players as they arrived at Johannesburg airport in the early hours of the morning. "Raining champs," one banner declared, as 5,000 supporters chanted: "We won, we won."

Kepler Wessels, the captain, told the multi-racial crowd: "Unfortunately it did not quite work out that way, but it's great to see South Africa as a united nation." Peter Kirsten, the leading batsman, added: "I would just like to say one thing. I am not available as president."

The climax of the celebrations came at noon, when police and firemen escorted the players on an open double-decker bus through the city centre, as air force jets roared overhead in close formation and a military helicopter dropped confetti on an estimated 10,000 people outside the city hall.

Office workers and street vendors crowded the pavements as hundreds more clambered on to post boxes.

chung from lamp posts, and showered the parade with streamers from windows and rooftops. "Step aside the Chippendales, here come the real hunkies," one banner read. Another poster ruefully declared: "Is it a bird, is it a plane, no it's the XXXXX rain."

Pik Botha, the foreign minister, referring to late-night television coverage of the competition, said: "You don't know how many sleepless nights you've caused us, but you've brought us joy."

Officials of the African National Congress joined in the applause when the team manager, Alan Jordaan, told the crowd: "We have begun to heal our land."

Dave Richards, the wicketkeeper, added: "It's wonderful how the country got behind us. It just shows what we've been missing." The vice-captain, Adrian Kuiper, had a simpler message: "Today, I'm proud to be a South African."

A spokesman for the United Cricket Board earned the biggest cheer when he raised his arms in a victory salute and declared: "Viva the South African people."

England A prepare, page 36
World Cup verdict, page 36

Coker to return for cup

BY PETER BILLS

TROY Coker, Australia's World Cup No. 8, will be available to enhance Harlequins' hopes of retaining the Pilkington Cup. Coker returns to Britain next week ready for the semi-final on April 4 against Leicester at the Stoop Memorial ground. If Harlequins win, Coker has promised club officials he will stay for the final on May 2.

The news may raise eyebrows around Welford Road, Leicester, for although Coker's journey may be acceptable under the competition rules, ethically it might upset some. He went home last month to take up an appointment in Brisbane.

Colin Herdridge, the Harlequins secretary, said: "Troy has been a club member for two or three years and has played several games for us this season." Coker added: "I have a few loose ends to tidy up while I am in England... so I see no reason why I should not finish a season I started with Harlequins."

Richmond's goal, page 33
Club news, page 33

Looking good on the move

THE only problem with today's ultra-glamorous, super-sleek, sprayed-on, superhero running gear is that you cannot actually run in it. Not without ruining the look of the cozzie, anyway. But the love affair with lycra continues. Lycra, the material that does not conceal the bodily parts but throws them into ever-sharper relief. Athletes look a million dollars when they are standing still. But the female cozzies, in particular, do not look so good if you are moving. "You spend all the time before a race fidgeting to make sure your bum hasn't fallen out," one top female athlete told this column. "And as soon as you start running, your bum falls out."

So now I bring great news to athletes everywhere. Nike has unveiled the official

uniforms for the United States Olympic team and it includes a new design for women's shorts and leotards "with a new lightweight trim developed for women's lingerie and which prevents lycra shorts, unitards and leotards from riding up the body." "Athletes like to feel very fast without having to worry about uniform fit," Joanne Young, the Nike apparel promotions manager, said, not without ambiguity.

There are other things that bother me about running gear. Why don't designers produce a running vest without a enormous white label hanging out the back? Why, with running and running clothes ever more technologically advanced, do runners at all events from the Olympics down have to attack their numbers with four somewhat lo-tech safety pins? And what will Gail Lewis come up with this year to beat the edginess of last year's outfit, the Santa Monica decollet? And ou sont les Fiojios d'antant?

Richard Evans finds a new twist in an infamous horse racing swindle

The photographs taken of Good Hand racing at Catterick, Thirsk and Ripon in 1981 showed he had a large, central white star on his forehead. The picture taken of the Leicester race winner with Stephen Wiles, the trainer, on March 28 1982 shows no sign of such a star.

"It is not believable that Good Hand's star was obliterated by dyeing," the petition states. "The hairs of so-called grey horses are, in fact, a mixture of black and white. To produce a convincing grey effect would require the hairs to be dyed individually. That is not a practical proposition."

In addition to the "suppressed" photographs, a professor from the University of Wales who has carried out detailed research into the case has concluded Good Hand was not the winner of the Leicester race having compared whorls — the equivalent of equine fingerprints — on the heads of the two horses.

Richardson, who received a suspended jail sentence and a £20,000 fine, was subsequently warned off by the Jockey Club for 25 years. He continues to deny strenuously any part in the swindle.

Fresh evidence, page 34
Today's cards, page 35



Fresh face? Good Hand running in 1981

Ringer verdict questioned

Mystery winner: Stephen Wiles and the horse masquerading as Flockton Grey at Leicester in 1982

Langer suffers a loss of form

FROM MITCHELL PLATT
GOLF CORRESPONDENT
IN PONTE VEDRA, FLORIDA

BERNHARD Langer retreated with a second round of 74 as Craig Parry, of Australia, established the early halfway target alongside Davis Love III, of the United States, in the Players Championship here on the TPC Stadium course yesterday.

Parry, who won the Bell's Scottish Open last summer, compiled a round of 68 for a 36-hole total of 135, nine under par, which Love matched with a 68 of his own. Ian Baker-Finch, the Open champion, hoisted himself onto a leader board with a 67 for 137 and Tom Watson (70 for 138) remained in contention.

Nick Faldo, one of the later starters, was hoping to build on his first round of 68. It had been Langer's aim to do the same when he set out under clear blue skies with only the suggestion of a breeze, but Langer is struggling with all aspects of his game. He is the first to admit that he has difficulty in getting his backswing and downswing on a similar plane and that, when they are far apart, he has little knowledge as to where the ball is going.

"The problem is that I tend to lay the club off much like Raymond Floyd," he explained. "Then I have to bring it up, which I do, and although it looks in a good position, I can continue the movement so that I go over the top, which causes me to either pull-hook the ball or block it to the right."

Langer would appear to be pushing more than he is pulling, although that is obviously no consolation to him. He was out of luck at the 18th — his 9th — when a well-hit two iron kissed the branch of a tree on the right, causing the ball to ricochet at right angles across the fairway before disappearing into a watery grave.

Meanwhile, Parry, who won the Australian Masters earlier this year, advanced towards the prospect of winning a tournament that carries with it a ten-year exemption on the US Tour. Parry, however, is unlikely to become a full-time player here as he enjoys being a free agent and playing in his native Australia in addition to Europe.

Faldo began his second round with a birdie at the 1st hole, Sandy Lyle, who had a first-round of 71, took six at the 2nd. Severiano Ballesteros and Ian Woosnam were both looking only to survive the halfway cut after first rounds of 75. Ballesteros gave himself encouragement with birdies at the 1st and 3rd holes.

EARLY LEADING SECOND-ROUND SCORES (US unless stated): 132: G Parry (Aus), 67, 68; D Love (I), 67, 68; 133: P Burchard, 67, 66; 137: B Lyle, 69, 68; E Harnett, 68, 70; 138: I Baker-Finch (Aus), 70, 68; 139: T Watson, 69, 70; G Beck, 71, 67; 140: S Faldo, 69, 71; 141: C Parry, 69, 71; 142: B Langer (Ger), 69, 71; 143: M Mackenzie (Aus), 70, 70; 144: G Norman (Aus), 71, 72; 145: C Montgomerie (GB), 70, 70.

Photograph, page 34
Experience wins, page 34

Living history

DEVELOPER spare that tree! For once, such a plea has been heeded. The tree in question is a living chunk of sporting history. Manor Ground, the home of Ilkeston Town in Derbyshire, is being developed — that is to say, smashed up and built on — and the club play their last match there today. Ilkeston, in the West Midlands Regional League first division, will move to a new ground but the tree will remain in memory of an FA Cup first-round tie in 1951 against Rochdale.

Rochdale were a goal up when the ball got stuck in the tree. It was the first time a white ball had been used at Ilkeston and they didn't have a spare. The referee refused to allow play to continue with a brown ball. It took 20 minutes to get the damn thing down, most of spent ineffectually poking about with a clothesline prop. The referee suspected the delay was an attempt to con a financially rewarding replay out of the fixture and

the FA held an enquiry. But Ilkeston escaped censure, the ball eventually came down, Rochdale won — and the tree still stands.

Rugby revival

THE Haka, the Maori war cry, is part of rugby life. "Kamata, Kamata, ka ora, ka ora," the All Blacks roar before every game. Now Australian rugby people — both codes — want to introduce an Aboriginal war cry to their pre-match ritual. The Kangaroos — the league boys — used to do a war cry when they were in England on every tour between 1908 and 1967. Now they want to revive it.

Reg Gasnier, former Kangaroo captain, said: "The opening line was 'wallee, mullara, choomooroo, tingal, nah, nah, nah'. It means that we are a race of fighters descended from the wars. Beware, beware, beware. I've never forgotten it."

SIMON BARNES ON SATURDAY

Salutations to David Jones, of Wigan. Jones, aged 15, has set a personal best at the archetypal skill of kasey-uppy (that is juggling a football without letting it bounce). His first attempt, held after lessons at Deanery school, saw him

score 800. He followed this with 1,000, a few taps and nudges shy of his PB. Third time, he soared into the stratosphere with 1,460, a feat that will probably take him to Wembley to strut his gravity-defying stuff before the Rumbelows Cup final.

Picture this

FINAL words from the Ministry of Silly Rules, aka the cricket World Cup. Graham Gooch travelled 52 floors to be photographed from the roof of the Regent Hotel in Melbourne with the MCG in the background. But the photographer came up with the ultimate faux pas. "Smile please," he said. Gooch did not move a hair of his moustache. "I've spent a long time cultivating this door image," he said. "I'm not ruining it now."



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WEEKEND TIMES

SATURDAY MARCH 28 1992

Where have all the flowers gone?

Flora Britannica is a nationwide project to survey where wild plants stand in our culture. Richard Mabey believes that such a 'human dossier' for plants is vital

Most summers a curious tale of misanthropy leaks out of one of Britain's high-security nature reserves. The scene of the action is often different, but the story the same. Wardens, fearful that some of the last surviving colonies of rare orchids may be dug up by piratical collectors, hack off the flower spikes as soon as they are in bud to make the plants less conspicuous. The plants survive — but only as emasculated, joyless, botanical specimens.

Whether true, or a kind of modern myth, the story does catch something of the vein of puritanism that bedevils our official attitudes towards wild flowers. We don't publicly relish them in the way we do birds. They have a few, marginal image. Television largely ignores them because of the inconsiderate lack of movement, or anatomises them as biological wonders. They are distant, as rarities, scientific specimens, or props in a nostalgic, Edwardian afterglow.

Yet down in the parish, the vernacular relationship with our flora is flourishing. We still kiss under the mistletoe (though without much clue as to why), thread daisy chains, make solemn black-lists of weeds, fight to save landmark trees, munch blackberries, put heather in the car radiator for good luck. And every November, in a remarkable survival of ancient plant symbolism, we wear poppies — a meaningful symbol of blood and new life ever since the Egyptians — for remembrance.

At the grassroots we still have an almost aboriginal, half-instinctive respect for wild plants. They chart the seasons for us, from primrose to holly tree, colour our place-names, increasingly invade our houses as herbal medicines, natural dyes, hand-made furniture. Above all, they help shape the character of the places where we live. It would be hard to think of chalk country, for example, shorn of the white plumes of old man's beard in the hedges, or moorland without heather.

These are all dynamic relationships, which are constantly adapting to change and picking up new meanings, and they are the channels, I suspect, through which most people come to plants. When I was a teenage naturalist, I had time only for the dash and romance of birds, especially those that marked special moments of the year or favourite spots, such as swallows and barn owls.

A decade later it was the same sense of a meeting ground between the human and natural worlds that began to fascinate me about plants.

I'd begun haunting the north

Norfolk coastal marshland, still on the trail of birds, and had stumbled on a surviving local custom for eating wild vegetables. Samphire was the most popular, and also the strangest. The bright green shoots — half seaweed, half maritime cactus — were sold at fishmongers and cottages all along the coast, and were cooked and eaten rather like asparagus. There was a strict local lore about picking: the shoots were best after midsummer's day and should only be gathered where they were "washed by every tide". There were stories of fabulous saltings where samphire grew like a lawn for acres, and of the monster specimen that had sprung up near a local sewage outfall after the floods of 1953. It was 6ft tall and thick as a leg at the base. It was carried back to Blakeney on the crossbar of a bike and later hung above the bar in a local pub, like a prize.

Soon I had progressed to sea

spinach and sea kale, to the feathery sprays of fennel (introduced to this country by the Romans as a medicinal herb for indigestion, but also wonderful cooked with fresh mackerel) and another Roman pot-herb, the angelica-scented alexanders, whose early sprouting, bright green leaf sprays are naturalised on most coastal banks and lanes.

That process of "naturalisation", by which a foreign plant escapes to become settled and self-perpetuating in the wild, is analogous in many ways to the manner in which plants settle into a human, cultural substrate. Sometimes the two processes proceed in parallel. But they can be intensely local, parochial almost, to such a degree that they haven't yet become part of popular knowledge. Japanese knotweed (a throw-out from Victorian gardens) has become established as our most aggressive and uncompromising shrubby weed. But has this begun to generate local nicknames? Were any of the bizarre coinings volunteered during a House of Lords debate on weeds in 1989 really in current use? Is anyone eating the young shoots, as they do in the Far East and the United States?

And what is the street-level opinion of another vast and vigorous weed, the giant hogweed (from the Caucasus mountains, circa 1893, again via Victorian gardens)? This was christened "the trifid" by the popular press back in 1970, when it was realised that the sap caused rashes of blisters on skin exposed to the sun. Children, no doubt fascinated by the plant's Gothic appearance, had been making pea-shooters out of its hollow stems. Have they given it any more expressive names, or

worked out any ingenious ways of using the stems safely?

Newcomers they may be, but these alien weeds can sometimes create a real *genus loci*. Along the River Don in Sheffield there is an extraordinary population of fig trees, dense enough in one place to form a small wood. They are all about 70 years old and it looks as if their concentration in this incongruous spot may be intimately linked with Sheffield's economic history. The source of the seeds was most probably sewage (though just possibly refuse from sauce and pickle factories), but these Mediterranean plants almost certainly have the steel industry to thank for their successful establishment in the 1920s. At that time river water was used in the factories for cooling and the outfalls kept the downstream reaches of the Don at a steady 20°C — sufficient for the germination of the seeds. Following the decline of the steel industry, the river temperature returned more or less to normal and no new trees have been able to sprout. Dr Oliver Gilbert, who unravelled the figs' history, says "they are as much a part of Sheffield's industrial heritage as Bessemer converters, steam hammers and crucible steel".

There are botanical floral landmarks like this all over Britain. Some are ancient and possibly ecclesiastical, such as the snake's head fritillaries that turn Oxford's Magdalen Meadow purple in late April; or literary, like Words-

worth's host of daffodils, which still nod on the edges of Ullswater. Some are obstinate living monuments, which mark out the ground of old settlements: skeletal (but reviving) elms along the closes and boundary banks of vanished East Anglian villages; herbs such as birthwort (once used in midwifery, and probably an abortifacient) among the ruins of nunneries in Godstow, Norwich and Cambridge.

Trees make the biggest contribution to a sense of place — though sometimes they are only fully appreciated when they are threatened. The story of the fall — and rise — of Selborne's churchyard yew is a striking example. This 1,500-year-old Hampshire tree, immortalised and measured by Gilbert White and William Cobbett, was blown down in the January 1990 gale, but was stood back on its feet after heroic efforts by local forestry students.

Days after replanting, a water main burst under the roots and gave them 36 hours of bountiful drenching. And when the tree was relieved of its massive top branches and foliage to give its damaged roots a better chance to thrive, the feel of the village green and churchyard was transformed, and they looked suddenly airy and light and right. Since then it has come more sharply into parish consciousness than ever before.

Old Selborne inhabitants have come long distances to buy souvenir slivers of the tree under which they used to meet and court

and have lunch, and larger pieces have been made into all kinds of woodware, including a concert lute for the church.

Often whole constellations of trees form a background so familiar that it is barely remarked on — even when the tree is as striking as the native black poplar. In the 1970s it was believed there were only 1,000 specimens left. But a long and exhaustive survey has turned up populations throughout England and Wales, especially on the Welsh borders, East Anglia and Gloucestershire.

The black poplar is a dramatically handsome tree. The trunk is massive and fissured, covered with bosses and burls, and often it develops a decided lean in middle age. The branches turn down towards their ends, then sweep up again into twigs which, once the voluptuous crimson catkins have fallen, carry dense switches of shiny, beech-shaped leaves. In the Vale of Aylesbury they are the commonest tree, a stunning sight as the amber buds and straw-yellow flower stalks shine in the spring sunshine.

Colonies of plants like this are an integral part of our sense of locality and season, part of what makes one place different from another. They are the most steadfast living things in the community and will have an increasing significance as political and economic change tends to make all places homogenous.

Rural expectations: "Colonies of plants are an integral part of our sense of locality and season. They are part of what makes one place so different from another"



'We hope Flora Britannica encourages a more unified experience of local vegetation'



RICHARD MABEY



Join in the great British flora hunt

THE Flora Britannica will depend entirely on information sent in from community groups, families — and *Times* readers — across Britain over the next 18 months. Rather than a botanical flora, the resulting book will aim to be a cultural one, assembled from the letters — be they stories, recipes, memories, or any other insight into how wild plants touch our lives today. In its vast scope, it will be the first project of its type in the country.

To participate, the first step is to read the Flora Britannica handbook, which describes the kind of information sought and how to take part in the project. Find it through local conservation groups, or direct from Flora Britannica, The Handbook, PO Box 7, London W3 6JX (£1 each including p&p; make cheques payable to BBC Magazines). The publishers will try to name everyone who contributes to the final book.

<p>FOOD AND DRINK PAGE 6</p>  <p>Frances Bissell continues the wild plants theme by foraging for greens in the fields and hedgerows</p>	<p>CHILDREN PAGE 8</p>  <p>Two-legged kid meets four-legged namesake as Lee Rodwell reports on Britain's booming farm attractions</p>
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FILM

APCALYPSE NOW! (18): Coppola's gargantuan Vietnam odyssey, revised in 70mm. Martin Sheen as the special agent with orders to kill Marlon Brando's rogue Colonel. MGM Shaftsbury Avenue (071-836 6279/379 7025).

BARTON FINK (15): The Coen brothers' marvellous macabre comedy about a New York playwright all at sea in 1940s Hollywood. Starring John Turturro, John Goodman. A triple Cannes prizewinner. Barbiican (071-638 8891) Renel (071-837 8402).



Drifter: River Phoenix stars in *My Own Private Idaho*

LA BELLE NOISEUSE (15): Jacques Rivette's hypnotic exploration of a painter and his model, struggling to complete an abandoned canvas. Close to a masterpiece. With Michel Piccoli, Emmanuelle Béart, Jane Birkin. Chelsea (071-351 3742/3743) Metro (071-437 0757) Renel (071-837 8402).

BLACK ROBE (15): Seventeenth-century Jesuit (Lorraine Bracco) tries to convert Indians in northern Quebec. Intelligent epic from Brian Moore's novel. Director, Bruce Beresford. MGM Tottenham Court Road (071-636 6148).

BUGSY (18): Warren Beatty as Bugs Siegel, the gangster who invented Las Vegas. Sleek, witty, dazzling to behold. Starring Annette Bening; director, Barry Levinson. Camden Parkway (071-267 7034) MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) Odéon Kensington (0426 914666) Odéon Leicester Square (0426 915683) Screen on Baker Street (071-935 2772) Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

CAPE FEAR (18): Demonic ex-con Robert De Niro terrorises Nick Nolte and family. Martin Scorsese's ferocious, unpleasant remake of a classic revenge thriller. With Jessica Lange, Juliette Lewis. Camden Parkway (071-267 7034) Empire (071-497 9999) MGM Baker Street (071-935 2772) MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

THE DOUBLE LIFE OF VERONIQUE (15): Krzysztof Kieslowski's brilliantly filmed conundrum about two girls (one Polish, one French) who seem to share a life. With Irène Jacob, Philippe Valler. Curzon Mayfair (071-465 8865).

FREELANCE (15): Emilio Estevez is kidnapped into the future for a mind transplant. Depressing high-tech adventure; with Mick Jagger, Anthony Hopkins. Director, Geoff Murphy. MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) MGM Haymarket (071-839 1527) MGM Oxford Street (071-636 0310) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

FRIED GREEN TOMATOES AT THE WHISTLE STOP CAFE (12): Heart-warming lives of 1960s folks down South. Shallow, but ingratiating. With Kathy Bates, Jessica Tandy, Mary Stuart Masterson; director, Jon Avnet. Notting Hill Coronet (071-727 6705) Odéon Haymarket (0426 914666) Odéon Kensington (0426 914666) Screen on Baker Street (071-935 2772) Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

HEAR MY SONG (15): Promoter seeks redemptive Irish tenor Josef Locke, wanted in Britain for tax evasion. Shaggy dog tale with modest pleasures. Starring Ned Beatty, Adrian Dunbar; director, Peter Chelom. MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) MGM Haymarket (071-839 1527) Odéon Kensington (0426 914666) Odéon Leicester Arch (0426 914666) Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

HIGH HEELS (18): Talkative melodrama of family secrets from Spain's master of camp, Pedro Almodóvar. With Victoria Abril, Mania Paradise. MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) Gate (071-727 4043) Lumière (071-836 0691) Screen on the Hill (071-435 3366).

J'EMBRASSE PAS (18): Latter-day Candide becomes a Paris hustler. Accomplished, but unedifying. With Manuel Blanc, Emmanuelle Béart, Philippe Noiret; director, André Téchiné. MGM Piccadilly (071-437 3561) MGM Tottenham Court Road (071-636 6148).

JFK (15): Oliver Stone's contentious, electrifying, three-hour drama about the Kennedy assassination. Kevin Costner as crusading D.A. Jim Garrison; a bustling supporting cast. MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) Odéon Mezzanine (0426 915683) Plaza (071-497 9999).

LATE FOR DINNER (PG): Two ordinary Jews awake from a 29-year deep freeze. Unsatisfying comic whimsy from director W.D. Richter. With Brian Wimmer, Peter Berg. MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031).

LIGHT SLEEPER (15): Labyrinthine elegy to the Elysees drug scene from writer-director Paul Schrader, partly saved by William Dafoe as a loner stumbling towards redemption. With Susan Sarandon. Curzon West End (071-439 4805).

MY OWN PRIVATE IDAHO (18): Gus Van Sant's quirky portrait of two drifters searching for a place to call home: striking and aggravating by turns. With River Phoenix, Keanu Reeves. Camden Plaza (071-485 2443) MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) MGM Shaftsbury Avenue (071-836 6279/379 7025) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) Screen on the Green (071-226 3520).

NECESSARY ROUGHNESS (12): American college football team makes good. Crushing dull, with clichés galore. With Nick Nolte, Hector Elizondo, Robert Loggia; director, Stan Dragoti. MGM Oxford Street (071-636 0310) Plaza (071-497 9999).

THE PRINCE OF TIDES (15): New York psychiatrist helps football coach face family secrets. Romantic drama with ideas above its station, grandly acted by Nick Nolte, Barbara Streisand directs and co-stars, but fails to sing. MGM Baker Street (071-935 2772) MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) Odéon Kensington (0426 914666) Mezzanine (0426 915683) Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

SHINING THROUGH (15): Opulent, preposterous wartime drama, with Melanie Griffith spying for the U.S. Government in Berlin. Stars Michael Douglas; director, David Seidler. Barbiican (071-638 8891) Odéon Kensington (0426 914666) West End (0426 915574).

THEATRE

LONDON

BACK UP THE HEARSE AND LET THEM SMELL THE FLOWERS: Intriguingly titled play by William Gaminara. A keen team of water-filter salesmen compete to grow wealthy by making us healthy. Hampstead Theatre, Swiss Cottage Centre, W83 (071-722 9301). Previews from Thurs, 8pm. Opens April 6.

DANCING AT LUGHANASA: Brian Friel's Olivier Award-winning memory-play, set in Thirties Donegal. Garrick, Charing Cross Road, WC2 (071-494 5089). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mats Thurs, 3pm, Sat, 4pm.

DEATH AND THE MAIDEN: Juliet Stevenson, Michael Byrne, Bill Paterson superb in Ariel Dorfman's Chilean political drama. Best play of 1991. Duke of York's, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (071-836 5122). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mats Thurs, 3pm, Sat, 4pm.

FIGHTING FOR THE DUNGHILL: First play by Guy Jenkin, about the turbulent life of the caricaturist Gillray (James Bolam), scourge of politicians in Georgian England. Warehouse Theatre, Dingwall Road, East Croydon (081-680 4060). Opens Tues, 8pm. Tues-Sat, 8pm, mat Sun, 5pm.

HEARTBREAK HOUSE: Paul Scofield and Vanessa Redgrave head Trevor Nunn's splendid cast in Shaw's timeless, state-of-the-art drama. Theatre Royal, Haymarket, SW1 (071-930 8800). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats Wed, Sat, 2.30pm.

HENRY IV PART 1: Julian Glover, Robert Stephens, Michael Maloney in Adrian Noble's cunning production from last year's Stratford season. Barbiican, Barbiican Centre, EC2 (071-638 8891). Previews tonight, Mon; opens Tues, 7pm and then continues in the repertoire.

JUSTIFIED: Camus's 1949 critique of revolutionary violence. Les Justes, set in Tsarist Russia and performed by new company, Entourage. Lyric Studio Theatre, King Street, W6 (081-741 8701). Opens Tues, 7pm. Then Mon-Sat, 8pm.

MOBY DICK: A girls' school puts on a fund-raising show. Tony Monopoly plays a headmistress playing Captain Ahab. Beached Musical. Piccadilly, Denman Street, W1 (071-867 1116). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mat Sat, 4pm.

NEVER MIND THE BALLOT BOX: A pack of political stand-up comedy. Packed with disrespect and with a different line-up each night. Royal Court, Sloane Square, SW1 (071-730 1745). Tues-Sat, 8pm.

STRAIGHT AND NARROW: Nicholas Lynnhurst, Neil Daglish and Carmel McHenry in likeable comedy about a dotting mother's worries, notably her gay son. Wyndham's, Charing Cross Road, WC2 (071-867 1116). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mats Wed, 3pm, Sat, 5pm.

UNCLE VANYA: Ian McKellen and Antony Sher outstanding in a Sean Mathias production that is subtle, balanced and tense with grief. National (Cottesloe), South Bank, SE1 (071-928 2252). Thurs-Sat, 7.30pm, mat next Sat, 2.30pm.

THE VIRTUOSO: Shadwell's Restoration comedy of bad behaviour in the home, directed with verve by Phyllida Lloyd. The Pit, Barbican Centre, EC2 (071-638 8891). Previews tonight, Mon-Wed, 7.30pm; opens Thurs, 7pm and then continues in repertoire.

THE WINTER'S TALE: Théâtre de Complicité applies its distinctive style of Shakespeare, with Simon McBurney and Kathryn Hunter. Lyric Theatre, King Street, W6 (081-741 2311). Preview Wed, 7.30pm. Opens Thurs, 7pm. Then Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats April 8, 9, 11, 25 and May 2, 2.30pm.

REGIONAL

BRISTOL: The English at play, keen on a flutter but keener for a winner, observed by Howard Brenton in his 1977 play *Exxon Downs*. Theatre Royal, King Street (0272 250250). Preview Wed, 7.30pm. Opens Thurs, 7.30pm. Then Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats April 9, 11, 16, 18, 2.30pm.

FARNHAM: Holidaying on a barge, a property developer and a local councillor unwisely discuss business in Robin Swicord's new comedy. Don't Rock the Boat. Redgrave Theatre, Brightwells (0252 715301). Opens Wed, 8pm. Tues-Sat, 8pm, mats Thurs, 2.30pm, Sat, 4pm.

MANCHESTER: The excellent cast from *Romeo and Juliet* now tackle Miller's *A View from a Bridge*, with Jonathan Hackett as the stubborn longshoreman, Eddie. Royal Exchange, St Ann's Square (061-833 9333). Preview Wed, 7.30pm. Opens Thurs, 7.30pm. Then Mon-Thurs, 7.30pm, Fri and Sat, 8pm, mats Wed, 2.30pm, Sat, 4pm.

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON: Season opens with Amanda Harris and Anton Lesser in *The Taming of the Shrew*, heading a new cast in Bill Alexander's brilliant touring production (Royal Shakespeare Theatre). Royal Shakespeare Theatre (both theatres: 0789 295623). Shrew: previews tonight, Mon, Tues, 7.30pm; opens Wed, 7pm. Beggar's Opera: previews tonight-next Sat, 7.30pm, mat tonight, next Sat, 1.30pm; opens April 7. Both productions play in repertoire.

TOWARDS THE MILLENNIUM: Simon Rattle's journey continues with two classic chamber dramas from the second decade of the century. Schoenberg's settings of "three times seven" poems of Rilke, *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912) and Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* (1918). The musicians are from the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group. In the Schoenberg Elise Ross sing-speaks and Emanuel Ax is the pianist, while in the Stravinsky the actors are from the Trestle Theatre Company. Adrian Boult Hall, Paradise Place, Birmingham (021-236 2392/3889), tomorrow, 7.30pm.

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: Continuing in the series, Rattle and orchestra give three performances of the same seminal piece by Schoenberg, *Pierrot Lunaire*, with Debussy's evocative and equally innovative orchestral images, composed over the period from 1905 until 1912 (again with Emanuel Ax as the soloist). There is also Prokofiev's First Piano Concerto (1911-12), an explosively brilliant example of the young man's art which caused a furore when first performed. St David's Hall, Cardiff (0222 371236). Tues, 7.30pm. Symphony Hall, Birmingham (021-212 3333). Wed, 7.30pm. Festival Hall, South Bank, London SE1 (071-928 8800), Thurs, 7.30pm.

LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: One of the brightest younger conductors now on the drop, the American, Kent Nagano,



When family affairs get out of control: Victoria Abril (left) and Marisa Paredes play rivaling daughter and mother in Almodóvar's camp melodrama, *High Heels*

MUSIC

OPERA

DON CARLOS: A new production for English National Opera of Verdi's opera by David Pountney, opens this week. Mark Elder conducts a strong cast in this vast, grand drama of conflict between personal and political demands. Rosalind Pountney returns to the house as Elisabeth, Edmund Barham sings Don Carlos, Linda Fennie is Princess Eboli, Gwyneth Howell takes the role of King Philip and Richard van Allan lords it as the Grand Inquisitor. Coliseum, St Martin's Lane, London WC2 (071-836 3161). Thurs, next Sat, 6.15pm.



Impressive: Gregory Yurishich plays the part of William Tell

WILLIAM TELL: Meanwhile, another epic, again contrasting massive public scenes with intimate private ones, returns to the Royal Opera stage. John Cox's production of Rossini's opera, conducted now as in the production's first incarnation by Michael Plesson, again has the impressive Gregory Yurishich in the title role, while the taxing part of Arnold is taken by the high tenor Chris Merritt. Jane Eaglen takes the role of Matilde and Patricia Barlow is Hedwige. Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London WC2 (071-240 1066/1911), Thurs, 6pm.

CLASSICAL

WALTON 90TH ANNIVERSARY: Sir William Walton would have been 90 this Sunday to celebrate the event Richard Hickox conducts the music he wrote in 1943-4 for Olivier's film of Henry V with the London Symphony Orchestra; between sections Tom Corbett reads the part of the king. Also Vaughan Williams's *Dona nobis pacem*, the anti-war cantata of 1936, set to words by Whitman and others, with the LS Chorus, the soprano Yvonne Kenny and the baritone Bryn Terfel. Barbican Centre, Silk Street, London EC1 (071-638 8891), tomorrow, 7.30pm.

DESZO RANKI: The elegant Hungarian pianist gives an attractive lunchtime programme which includes extracts from his compatriot György Kurtág's *Games*, Haydn's *Minor Variations* and Beethoven's *Sonata in E flat*, Op 31 No 1. The concert will be relayed on Radio 3. St John's, Smith Square, London SW1 (071-222 1061), Mon, 1pm.

TOWARDS THE MILLENNIUM: Simon Rattle's journey continues with two classic chamber dramas from the second decade of the century. Schoenberg's settings of "three times seven" poems of Rilke, *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912) and Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* (1918). The musicians are from the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group. In the Schoenberg Elise Ross sing-speaks and Emanuel Ax is the pianist, while in the Stravinsky the actors are from the Trestle Theatre Company. Adrian Boult Hall, Paradise Place, Birmingham (021-236 2392/3889), tomorrow, 7.30pm.

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LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: One of the brightest younger conductors now on the drop, the American, Kent Nagano,

recently appointed as the new Music Director of the Halle Orchestra, conducts a magnificent programme of music: Boulez's *Mémorale*, for flute (Paul Edmund-Davies) and chamber orchestra (1973-5), Beethoven's "Emperor" Piano Concerto, with Alfred Brendel, and the suite from Bartók's ballet *The Wooden Prince*—as it happens, another work from the second decade of our century, though these three dances were extracted only in the Twenties. Barbican Hall, Silk Street, London EC1 (071-638 8891), Thurs, 7.45pm.

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA: Kurt Masur, who has just settled himself into one of the hottest seats in music—music director of the New York Philharmonic—is noted chiefly for his conducting of mainstream Austro-German classics. So a programme of Hindemith, Schoenberg and Tchaikovsky may reveal hidden insights. The vivacious French pianist Cécile Ousset is the soloist in *Rhapsody in Blue*. Festival Hall, South Bank, London SE1 (071-928 8800), Wed, 7.30pm.

CROSBY, STILLS AND NASH: The celebrated band offers its first UK dates since 1982 with two nights of concerts promoting the re-released CSNY best-of compilation, *So Far*. The absence of Neil Young may be telling, but you can count on some classic sweet Sixties folk rock. Hammersmith Odeon, London W6 (081-741 4668), today and tomorrow, 6.45pm.

THE FALLS: Back on cracking form with their new album *Code of Self*, Mark E. Smith and company bring their caustic sentiments and visceral funk to the capital. Barbican Academy, London SW9 (071-326 1022), tomorrow, 6.45pm. Corn Exchange, Cambridge (0223 357851), Mon, 6.45pm.

TORI AMOS: Hot on the heels of her recent self-titled tour, the precocious American singer-songwriter takes to the road again offering a mixture of passionate piano-playing and idiosyncratic, inflating lyrics. Regency Theatre (071-494 5080), London WC2, Thurs and Fri, 7.45pm. (A scheduled performance at Southampton's Guildhall on Wednesday has been postponed).

ALISON MOYET: Following her 11-day, sell-out tour of the United States, the mighty-voiced singer performs jazz and blues in an intimate, one-off, acoustic show. The Mean Fiddler, London NW10 (081-961 5490), Fri, 8pm.

JAZZ

DIANOGA BATES'S DELICIOUS PRINCE: The award-winning jazz composer and ex-Los Angeles keyboard player kicks off a UK and European tour with his 19-piece, horn-heavy band. Cabot Hall, London E14 (071-418 2418), Thurs, 1.05pm.

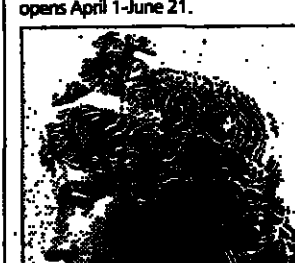
EXHIBITIONS

SOVEREIGN: Despite royal discouragement for any too lavish celebration of the Queen's 40th year on the throne, the V&A has made this the subject of its principal summer exhibition. The main focus is the Queen's changing image since 1952: the increasing media accessibility of the royal family is reflected in hi-tech collages of television and newspaper photographs. There are also some more old-fashioned portraits, serious and cartoon, and inevitably coronation robes. No doubt the obvious serious/popular royal exhibition for this venue, of the Queen's jewels, will be reserved for the golden jubilee. Victoria and Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 (071-938 8361). Mon-Sat, 10am-5.30pm, Sun, midday-5.30pm, opens April 3-September 13.

RECOVERING POMPEII: In 79AD Pompeii was caught like a fly in amber, but that does not mean that nothing changes now. Since the last Pompeii exhibition in London, excavation has continued, techniques have been revolutionised, and all kinds of new discoveries have been made. This new show not only contains many of the major works of art found on site, but also gives the world an absorbing progress report on the future of the past. No wonder it broke all attendance records on one of its previous tour stops, in Houston, Texas. Accademia Italiana, 24 Rutland Gate, London SW7 (071-225 3474). Daily, 10am-6pm (Wed to 8pm), opens April 1-June 21.

More treasures: detail of an ephre found in Pompeii

SVEN BERLIN AT 80: Always the stormy petrel of the St Ives artists, often at loggerheads with leading figures like Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth, Sven Berlin remains at 80 as awkward a customer as ever, and still an artist and writer to reckon with. A natural outsider, his career has also included professional adagio dancing, and he has written about his passions for fishing and for gyser. This mini-retrospective of paintings, sculpture and drawings underlines the oddity and the serious commitment to art. Belgrave Gallery, 22 Masons Yard, London SW1 (071-930 0294). Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm, opens April 1-23.



OTTO DDE: The German painter is known in this country by a few paintings from his "critical

realist" phase. This retrospective shows that he began with innocuous self-portraits, was shocked into Expressionist violence and Dada savagery by the first world war, and ended the Twenties as an adherent of the Neue Sachlichkeit (new objectivity), using probing realism to embody social criticisms. During the Nazi period he found refuge in religious painting and landscape. Afterwards he took on a cloudy sort of symbolism. A thrilling odyssey which marks Dix as a significant figure in 20th-century art. Tate Gallery, Millbank, London SW1 (071-821 1313). Mon-Sat, 10am-5.30pm, Sun, 2-5.30pm, until May 17.

WU GUANZHONG: Wu Guanzhong is Chinese, in his early seventies, and trained in Paris as well as Hangzhou. He has worked in Western styles and media, as in some of the oils included here, but the bulk of his painting is in the traditional Chinese form of brush-drawing with ink on paper. British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1 (071-636 1555). Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm, Sun, 2.30-6pm, opens Thurs until May 10.

DANCE

WHITE OAK DANCE PROJECT: The great Russian classical dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov has traded in his white tights in favour of bare feet in his new guise as modern dancer. This week, he presents the British premiere of the troupe he formed two years ago to showcase contemporary American choreography. Among the choreographers on offer are Martha Clarke, David Gordon, Lar Lubovitch, Meredith Monk, Paul Taylor and Mark Morris. Baryshnikov himself is expected to dance in every programme. White Oak opens on Thursday.

Sadler's Wells Theatre, Rosebery Avenue, London EC1 (071-278 8916), Thurs-Sat, 7.30pm.

THE ROYAL BALLET: Covent Garden's resident company makes its annual visit to the regions, starting on Monday with a one-week season in Bristol. On offer is Kenneth MacMillan's wonderfully passionate *Manon* and a triple bill of Ashton's cool *Monotones*, MacMillan's Chekhov ballet *Winter Dreams* and Balanchine's glorious *Ballet Symphonique in C*. On April 6, the Royal Ballet moves to the Birmingham Hippodrome with the same repertoire.

Bristol Hippodrome, St Augustine's Parade, Bristol (0272 899444). Fri-Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mat next Sat, 2.30pm.

LONDON CONTEMPORARY DANCE THEATRE: As part of the Spring Loaded festival, LCDT presents the culmination of a seven-week choreographic workshop programme in which company members have created new works on their fellow dancers. The Place Theatre, 17 Duke's Road, London WC1 (071-387 0031), Tues, Wed, Fri, next Sat, 8pm.

SALEROOMS

MONDAY: For the stars of *Monday*: sale of motor cars, motor bikes and accessories at the RAF Museum in Hendon are a couple of Soles (up to £300 each); others will be more taken with the 1926 Bentley Le Mans roadster (up to £120,000), or 1934 Aston Martin 1.5 litre 2-seater sports (up to £130,000). The accessories and related art 10.30am; vehicles 2.30pm.

SOtheby's, New Bond Street, London W1 (071-493 8080).

TUESDAY TO FRIDAY: Middle rank Old Master paintings are the London theme, with sales at Phillips, Tuesday 11am; Sotheby's, Wednesday 11am and 2.30pm; Christie's South Kensington, Thursday 10.30am; and Christie's King Street, Friday 11am.

Among the stars are a Van der Neophtian townscape at Phillips (up to £50,000) and a wedding feast by Hans van Wechten at Sotheby's (up to £80,000).

Phillips, 101 New Bond Street, London W1 (071-629 6602). Christie's South Kensington, 85 Old Brompton Road, London SW7 (071-581 7611). Christie's, King Street, St James's, London SW1 (071-839 9060).

WEDNESDAY: An early television in an elaborate cabinet, and a group of staddle stones are among more standard antiques shown in Taylor Scott's Derbyshire sale at Priory Nurseries.

Breton-on-the-Hill, at 10.30am. Taylor Scott, 1a Upper Church Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouche, Leicestershire (0530 416669).

THURSDAY: At King Street, Christie's have scientific instruments including an important 16th-century brass astrolabe (up to £80,000), 11am, while at 2pm Christie's South Kensington have numerous ingenious music machines and horned gramophones. At 6pm Bonhams hold their first sale in the Channel Islands, with pictures, furniture, silver and jewels offered at the Hotel Horizon at St Brelade's Bay, Jersey. Bonhams, Montpelier Street, London SW7 (071-584 9161).

FRIDAY: Manuscripts of unpublished poems by Siegfried Sassoon, Churchill's silk nightshirt, signed photographs of Queen Victoria and Dickens' jostle for attention with cigarette cards and golfing cartoons in Christie's South Kensington's sale of autograph letters and printed ephemera, 10.30am. At Sotheby's a 19th and 20th century furniture sale includes a very splendid English "boule" card table c. 1835 (up to £8,000). Christie's South Kensington, as above. Sotheby's, New Bond Street, as above.

BOOKINGS

LE BOURGEOIS GENTILHOMME: Nick Dear's new version of Molière's play with Timothy Spall as the hero Monsieur Jourdain who in his desperate search for learning and culture falls prey to a money-grabbing Count. Anita Dobson plays Madame Jourdain. National (Lyttelton), London SE1 (071-929 2252). Opens May 5. Postal booking is open now; telephone/personal booking from Monday.

1 PURITANI: The Welsh National Opera production of Bellini's last opera comes to the Royal Opera House. Set in Plymouth during the English Civil War, Bellini demonstrates that "in opera you must make people weep, be terrified and die through singing". June Anderson and Sumi Jo share the part of Elvira. Giuseppe Sabbatini plays Lord Arthur Talbot and Dmitri Hvorostovsky, Sir Richard Forth. Daniele Gatti conducts. Royal Opera House, London, WC2 (071-240 1066/240 1911). Opens May 12. Postal booking is open now and telephone/personal booking opens on Wednesday.

LEAVING: Simon Halsey conducts the City of Birmingham Orchestra and Chorus in the world premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage's choral piece written in 1991-92 exploring different aspects of "Leaving", from "Birth" through the different movements "Lovers", "Lullaby", "Drowning" and "Hymn". The words come from early biblical sources, Sylvia Plath, Yeats, Auden, Steve Smith and John Donne. This is followed by Tchaikovsky's Symphony No 6, "Pathétique". The soloists are Helen Walker, soprano, and Andrew King, tenor. Synagoga Hall, Birmingham (021-212 3333), May 9.

THE MADNESS OF GEORGE III: The National production of Alan Bennett's play with Nigel Hawthorne as George III tours the country in April and May. Directed by Nicholas Hytner. Theatre Royal, Newcastle (091-232 2064) Fri-Sat, 7.30pm. Lyceum, Sheffield (0742 769923). April 27-May 2. Theatre Royal, Bath (0225 448844), May 18-23. Alhambra, Bradford (0274 752000), May 25-30.

VIDEOS

THE GRIFTERS (Palace, 18): Tart dialogue and a buttered performance by Angelica Huston as an icy blonde hustler, although a disjointed plot knocks some shine off Stephen Frears' US debut. With John Cusack, Annette Bening; from Jim Thompson's thriller, 1990.

Icy blonde hustler: Angelica Huston stars in *The Grifters*

MEETING VENUS (Warner, 12): Good moments in Istvan Szabo's semi-autobiographical film about backstage squabbles at a Paris opera house, though a dull romance and Nils Arstrop's meek conductor-hero pose problems. With Glenn Close, and much music from *Tannhäuser*; produced by David Putnam, 1991.

SHADOWS (Palace, PG): John Cassavetes' directing debut: a nervous tapestry of New York bohemians. The film is showing signs of its age (1959), but is still vibrant. Rust is actor-director. *Faces*, *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie*, *Opening Night*, and *A Woman Under the Influence*.

SWANN IN LOVE (Artificial Eye, 18): A gentle clip into *Remembrance of Things Past*, exquisitely photographed, with a Jeremy Irons performance that expertly captures the melancholic elegance of Proust's bohemian Jew. Starring Orla Muller, Alain Delon; director, Volker Schlöndorff, 1984.

Think like a fish – and forget it

Lynne Truss switches into the 'Will she, won't she' world of people and pandas – and wonders whether it was worth it

REVIEW

When I visited Los Angeles in January, I stayed a few nights with a friend who had deprived himself of television, and consequently lived in a deathly quiet apartment with only plain white walls to look at.

"Oh yes!" I said (aghast), when I first saw the place. "This is nice: kind of homey." He didn't say anything. I sensed he was depressed. "And here's another thing," I said, waltzing into the big, blank floor space in the living-room. "One advantage to having no furniture – lots of room to dance."

He looked at me as though my head had just revolved through 360 degrees on my shoulders. Something wrong here, I thought, but I kept smiling. I looked around for something else to say, and saw a lamp in a far corner. "Nice lamp," I said, tentatively. "No it is not," he said, breaking his silence at last. "To call that lamp a nice lamp would be absurd."

Lynne, I thought. And I pictured the 6,000 miles I had just flown, to end up in a horror movie called *The Apartment that Time Forgot*.

The absence of a television set was clearly part of a much larger plan of misery and self-punishment. This man was limbering up for a barbed wire vest. He claimed not to pine for television, but since he habitually sat in hunched foetal positions with a faraway look in his eyes I don't know who he thought he was fooling.

Anyway, the reason I mention all this is that when Channel 4 started to screen the American series *Northern Exposure*, I experienced a bit of an after-shock, because it was *Northern Exposure* deprivation which most exacerbated my friend's emotional turmoil. On Monday nights he would get all grim around the mouth when he knew that the programme was starting. And then he would make himself a cup of weak herbal tea (in the apartment's only tea cup) and disappear to bed without saying goodnight.

So *Northern Exposure* has a lot to answer for; and I have watched its first two episodes rather warily, worrying what it might tell me about my friend's behaviour. I expected it to be about paranoia, initially, as it concerns a New York doctor forced by a contractual McGuffin to work in remote, small-town Alaska for four years. But it is too hokey for paranoia; there are too many comic native

Americans. The boss of the town appears to be Maurice (pronounced Mo-Reece), an ex-astronaut who sports a NASA beany hat while love interest focuses on the beautiful Maggie (Janine Turner), but only in the most tangential way, as she is portrayed as omniscient, independent and distinctly uninterested. She is the town's aircraft pilot, as well as being an expert on plumbing, and she derides the New York doctor for his do-it-yourself inadequacies.

There seems to be nothing cooking here at all, actually, yet for followers of the third series in the States, the issue of "Will she, won't she" is reaching fever pitch.

I can't imagine why my friend suffered such bad withdrawal symptoms. But these are early days. The pre-publicity linked the series with *Twin Peaks*, but it reminds me more of Garrison Keillor's *Lake Wobegon Days*. People in *Northern Exposure* have a horrible tendency to learn natty moral lessons about themselves ("I'm sorry, Mo-Reece, it was my foolish pride"), after which life moves on, whimsically.

This week, our fresh-faced hero spent time with a deeply lined native American witch-doctor, who told him with great mystical authority, "To catch a fish, you got to think like a fish." Perhaps this was a joke, but I doubt it. I think it was supposed to strike you as something wise and deeply comforting. To catch a fish, you got to think like a fish. Ho hum. Presumably the latest research on fishy neural skills is not available to Alaskan witch-doctors, or they would hesitate to give such advice. A fish has an attention span of about three seconds. Think like a fish, then, and you will immediately forget who you are and why you are standing on a river bank with a long stick in your hand.

In any case, most animals are a closed book when it comes to mind-reading and this is surely a blessing. Despite my hopeless anthropomorphism about cats, I have always resisted the "If only he could speak" argument, convinced that the contents of a cat's mind would come as a dreadful shock. "What a nice collar," one would say, in one's special talking-to-kitties voice. "It is not a nice collar," he would snap back, grumpily. "To call this collar a



Bamboo curtain on love: pandas are not what they're cracked up to be – she may prefer a leg of deer to his legover bamboo bribe

nice collar would be absurd." The great paradox of the giant panda – as seen on the recent *Arena* (BBC2) about Chi-Chi and in *Wildlife on One* last Monday (BBC1) – is that its friendly face appears to be a wide-open window on the soul, while the workings of its brain are like those of a black cat in a coal mine. In the days of the Chi-Chi and An-An debate, you can imagine the zoo-keepers of *déjà vu* sticking posters on their walls: "If you want to mate a panda, think like a panda." But how can you begin to empathise with a creature who thinks, "Oh well, I'll eat some more bamboo I suppose" for eight hours at a stretch each day?

Was diet the main problem with Chi-Chi's libido – the famous "will she, won't she" of the 1980s? The *Arena* (which was fascinating) showed lots of memory-lane footage of Chi-Chi cuffed the amorous An-An around the bicep and lumbering off again, in a way that

brought tears to the eyes. Similarly, in Monday's *Wildlife on One*, there were other girl pandas holding out for Mr Right, and knocking the blokes about. But it occurred to me that these boy pandas may be old-school romantic types who think they can buy sex with flowers and a dinner-for-two – all the while forgetting that the dimly restricted flora of the Chinese mountains dooms the formula to failure.

Boy panda: "Look what I brought you, darling."

Girl panda (not looking up): "Don't tell me. Bamboo."

Boy panda: "Well, yes. Um... what say we move down to that new place round the corner and get our paws sticky?"

Girl panda: "Don't waste your money, Sunshine. It will be bamboo specials, mark my words."

Both programmes were keen to impress on us that pandas are not cuddly (Chi-Chi was a spiteful little

girl, her keeper said), but failed to convince. In *Wildlife on One*, we were shown a panda eating a deer leg, which the commentary insisted was a shocking corrective to the cuddly image. But honestly, it seemed OK to me. In any case, the anti-cuddly argument was seriously undermined by a marvellous sequence in which a panda climbed up a tree, leaned through a cleft in its upper branches, and lost its balance, so that it got stuck (very cutely) like Winnie the Pooh in the rabbit hole.

Finally, what a relief that Channel 4's *The Camomile Lawn* is all over. A series so obviously inspired by the imperative "think like a fish" has never before graced our screens. Cold and soulless, the characters floated by displaying the attention-span and emotional profundity of the average guppy.

Moreover, despite its ostensible interest in the passage of time, with tiresome flashbacks, any sense of development or change

was perversely lacking. In fact, the habit of perpetual reminiscence paradoxically brought every event on to the same flat plane of action.

In character, emotion and sense of development, then, *The Camomile Lawn* had the depth of, well, of a camomile lawn.

Perhaps all this "Do you remember" stuff was just awkward exposition for the benefit of new viewers, tuning in after the first episode. Which makes it all the more tragic and pointless, because audiences were much more likely to jump off this particular bandwagon than to clamber on to it.

Perhaps *The Camomile Lawn* just lacked the "will she, won't she" element which makes people yearn (unto melancholy madness sometimes) for *Northern Exposure*, and made Chi-Chi the most famous panda in the world. In *The Camomile Lawn*, one could only ask "would she, wouldn't she, if she hadn't done it already?" Which is a lot less interesting somehow.

PREVIEW

● **Jeeves and Wooster** (tomorrow, ITV, 8.45pm)

I look forward to each new instalment of this Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie incarnation for all sorts of reasons, but I never thought miniature deckchairs would be one of them. This new series sees Bertie and Jeeves heading right-ho for Manhattan aboard the Ile de France, and rumour has it that the designer Eileen Doss has created ingenious shipboard settings, including a trick-perspective sundeck featuring deckchairs of dwindling size.

I am told that the production style of the new series (of six) is generally snappier than before, and that the colour temperature has been toned to greys and whites to give a more cinematic sense of Cole Porter's New York, where Bertie flies among artists, poets and dandies and jazz bands (as well as the usual drones, aunts and mad-bull millionaires).

● **Without Walls: J'Accuse** (Tuesday, Channel 4, 9pm)

It was good to see Robert McKee's *J'Accuse* (about *Citizen Kane*) win a Bafta last Sunday, but bizarre that McKee's name was hardly mentioned. Instead, the series producer, Gary Johnstone, collected the award on his own. Surely the quality of *J'Accuse* programmes depends heavily on the passion and thought of the presenter? If McKee had not cared so much about *Kane* there would have been no programme. So wish good luck to Michael Dibdin with Tuesday's *coup d'état* against the so-called Queen of Crime.

And watch out for *Reel Secrets*, which follows at 9.30pm (see below): the first of three cinema genre lectures by the doubtless all-forgiving Robert McKee. His delivery is mesmerising and his thick, black, emphatic eyebrows (contrasting with grey hair) have to be seen to be believed.

● **Timewatch: The Story of**

Elizabeth Nietzsche (Wednesday, BBC2, 8.10pm)

Being born the sister of Friedrich Nietzsche is the kind of handicap that either makes or breaks people. I suppose, for Elizabeth Nietzsche it meant leaving Germany in 1887, travelling to Paraguay, and starting her own master race in a jungle clearing. The interesting thing about her lost tribe of vegetarian Jew-haters is that it still exists, presumably practising eugenics and stiff-armed salutes.

Nazi fugitives made a beeline for it after the war: Josef Mengele pronounced it a home from home. Elizabeth Nietzsche stayed only two years, returning to Europe to nurse her brother through his final illness (she later founded the Nietzsche Archive).

Timewatch tells her story in two parts, and visits the shy Aryan goose-steppers of South America. L.T.

War of the literary titans

Whether the great literary critic F.R. Leavis would have approved of the poetic licence with which his life is treated in Nigel Williams's film *The Last Romantics* (tomorrow, BBC2, 10pm) is arguable. But then he was deeply suspicious of the mass media, believing it to threaten the continuity of English life and literature.

Williams is a child of television, resident editor of the documentary series *Bookmark* as well as a playwright. His approach to the life of Leavis is, he says, "a story that might have been, an imaginative reworking of the lives of two great critics."

The other critic was Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, who held Cambridge's chair of English when Leavis was an undergraduate. Leavis attacked Quiller-Couch's taste for "late Victorian poetry" and instead promoted the work of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound.

In *The Last Romantics* this literary difference of opinion is transformed into a tale of love and betrayal that has the elements of a thriller. In old age, Williams's Leavis, played by Ian Holm, remembers his betrayal of his mentor as he faces the defection of one of his most devoted students.

The Last Romantics, on BBC2 tomorrow night, focuses on the literary squabbles of F.R. Leavis and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch



No quarter: Leo McKern and Ian Holm do battle over the merits of writers' styles

Earlier, Quiller-Couch (Leo McKern) had given Leavis a treasured first edition of Wordsworth, despite hearing his reputation being torn to shreds in a Leavis lecture. The ageing Leavis is harangued by an agitated student (it is 1969) who turns Leavis's star pupil against literature.

"Criticism at its highest form is at the basis of the whole notion of culture," Williams says. "It is always at risk, and to argue for good work is crucial."

"It isn't about fashion and opinion, it's about the discussion of what's important in our culture. What should we keep and what should we throw away? Who decides which books to teach and who decides what is literature and what isn't?"

The Last Romantics has more than one strand, and an important thread is Leavis's relationship with his wife, the academic Q.D. (Queenie) Leavis. First seen as an earnest young blue stocking (Hilary Brindle), she ages into a woman with the starved look of one who has fed only her mind.

Sara Keselman, the older Queenie, gives her a vindictive intellectual passion, never

more satisfied than when putting a poem through the critical milliner.

Williams says the theme of marriage has a perennial fascination for him, none more so than those that are long-lived. The Leavis partnership survived 50 bawling years. Between them, they influenced more than one generation and were described, disparagingly, as "a firm".

The villain of the piece is Williams's fictional protester, the leather-jacketed Costain, played by Rufus Sewell, leader of the student demonstrators, who describes himself as a nihilist and whose aim is to destroy the English school system.

The passions are played out against the background of serene Cambridge cloisters, punts drifting along the banks and picnics in the meadows, all beautifully captured by director Jack Gold (of *The Naked Civil Servant* fame).

In the end, *The Last Romantics* is a story about teaching and being taught – the need of the pupil for the teacher and the teacher's need for the pupil. After all the arguments Leavis says simply: "I teach because I was taught."

CLARE COLVIN

A new television series explains the film-maker's art of tapping the emotions

Sex and spacemen

Most people who have seen Ridley Scott's film *Alien* will tell you that it is about a monster who gobbles up the crew of a spaceship. Wrong, says Robert McKee, the scriptwriter and lecturer: it is really about our fear of sex.

Next Tuesday on Channel 4 (9.30pm), in the first of three forays into the subtext of cinema, McKee expounds the mysteries that lie within "The Beauty of Horror".

Reel Secrets is McKee's second contribution to Channel 4's *Without Walls*. His debut, a witty hatchet-job on *Citizen Kane* in the *J'Accuse* slot, won a Bafta award for Best Arts Television Programme last Sunday.

According to him, horror movies are "the ghetto of film art", even though the best of them skillfully transform the

pain and meaninglessness of real life into a "meaningful emotional experience".

Using a generous selection of clips, McKee reveals how lighting, editing and direction are deployed to "take you beyond the fear of death". The initiated will consider the result to be a statement of the obvious; others will feel the scales fall from their eyes.

However, there are bound to be those who accuse McKee of breaking the butlerly on the wheel. *Nightmare on Elm Street* will be shown immediately after the first programme, and *The Producers* immediately after the second, "The Anger of Comedy". So isn't he spoiling



Fearflick: Robert McKee

the surprise? Killing the joke? "I don't think so," McKee says. "The assumption is that anyone can make a genre movie, but this is not the case. Take *Blue Velvet*: I know the tricks, David Lynch knows

the tricks, but he goes ahead and cites them anyway and he still knocks me over."

In a similar fashion, those of us who go to the cinema wanting to be scared witless nevertheless sit in the dark, arms folded, defying the director to spook us.

"It is becoming more difficult to frighten audiences," McKee says. "Their increased sophistication forces the film-makers to be even more imaginative. Cronenberg's *Dead Ringers* is a good example."

The key to successful terrorism is to keep the fantasy grounded in reality. *Nightmare on Elm Street* takes place in sunny suburbia:

Alien, in McKee's words, figures a gang of "23rd century truck drivers".

Dread should not be signposted, but creep up with subtlety. "There's nothing new in this – look at Shakespeare's imagery of nets and traps in *Othello*, or the scatological references in *Hamlet*. Sexuality is the universal poetic motif of horror."

"*Alien* uses the same methods as *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*. It should be fun to spot the techniques."

"A simple idea strongly executed in a film like *Alien*, or Bergman's *Through a Glass Darkly* (the subject of the third programme), opens the door to uncountable interpretations, but if you try to cram everything into a movie it will collapse in on itself."

MARK SANDERSON



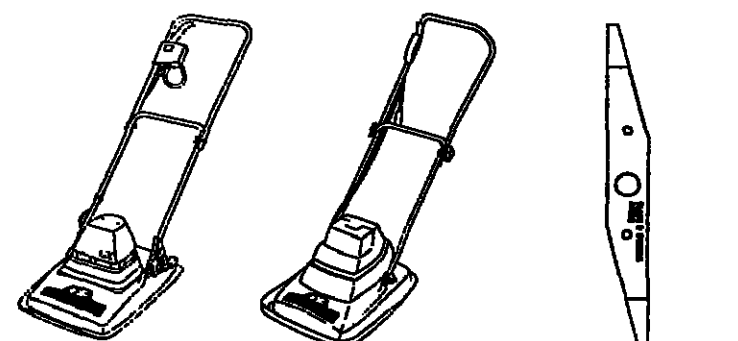
GUILTY SECRETS: TANITA TIKARAM, singer

"I'm addicted to *Lovejoy*. Ian McShane is quite charismatic. *Lovejoy* works in the same way as a lot of American productions, where the characters, rather than the plot, carry the programme. I think it's very funny; there's not much on telly that is. It's a bit like watching the *Antiques Roadshow*, only fannier. It's McShane's voice that I love more than anything, because it's so reassuring. I hope *Lovejoy* and Lady Jane don't get it together, because that would be really naïf."

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WICE



Reborn after New

Reborn to run after leaving New Jersey

David Sinclair
reviews a brace of
Bruce Springsteen
albums, his first
since he abandoned
his blue-collar roots
for Los Angeles

The myth of Bruce Springsteen has been all but blown to pieces. In the five years since he released his last album, *Tunnel of Love*, New Jersey's most famous son — adored for his songs emphasising the plain virtues and continuity of life in his native blue-collar community — has pulled up stakes and moved to a \$14 million estate in Beverly Hills.

The man whose music and lifestyle boosted an integrity which supposedly placed him above the grubby goings-on so depressingly typical of celebrity musicians, was depicted by the British tabloid newspapers as apparently two-timing his wife, whom he subsequently divorced. And the performer whose working practices have been built on longstanding foundations of loyalty dismissed the *E Street Band*. That was the extraordinary team of musicians featuring saxophonist Clarence Clemons, which had given him sterling service since the start of his career and played a key role in defining the Springsteen sound.

Unremarkable behaviour by the standards of most rock stars, perhaps, but among Springsteen's more obsessive fans a mood of disillusionment is abroad. In December *The Los Angeles Times* reported that subscriptions to the Seattle-based Springsteen fanzine, called *Backstreets*, were down by almost 65 per cent from a mid-Eighties high of 25,000. According to *Backstreets* editor Charles Cross: "In some way, you're on trial. I don't think the American public is as forgiving of Bruce Springsteen as they were in the Eighties."

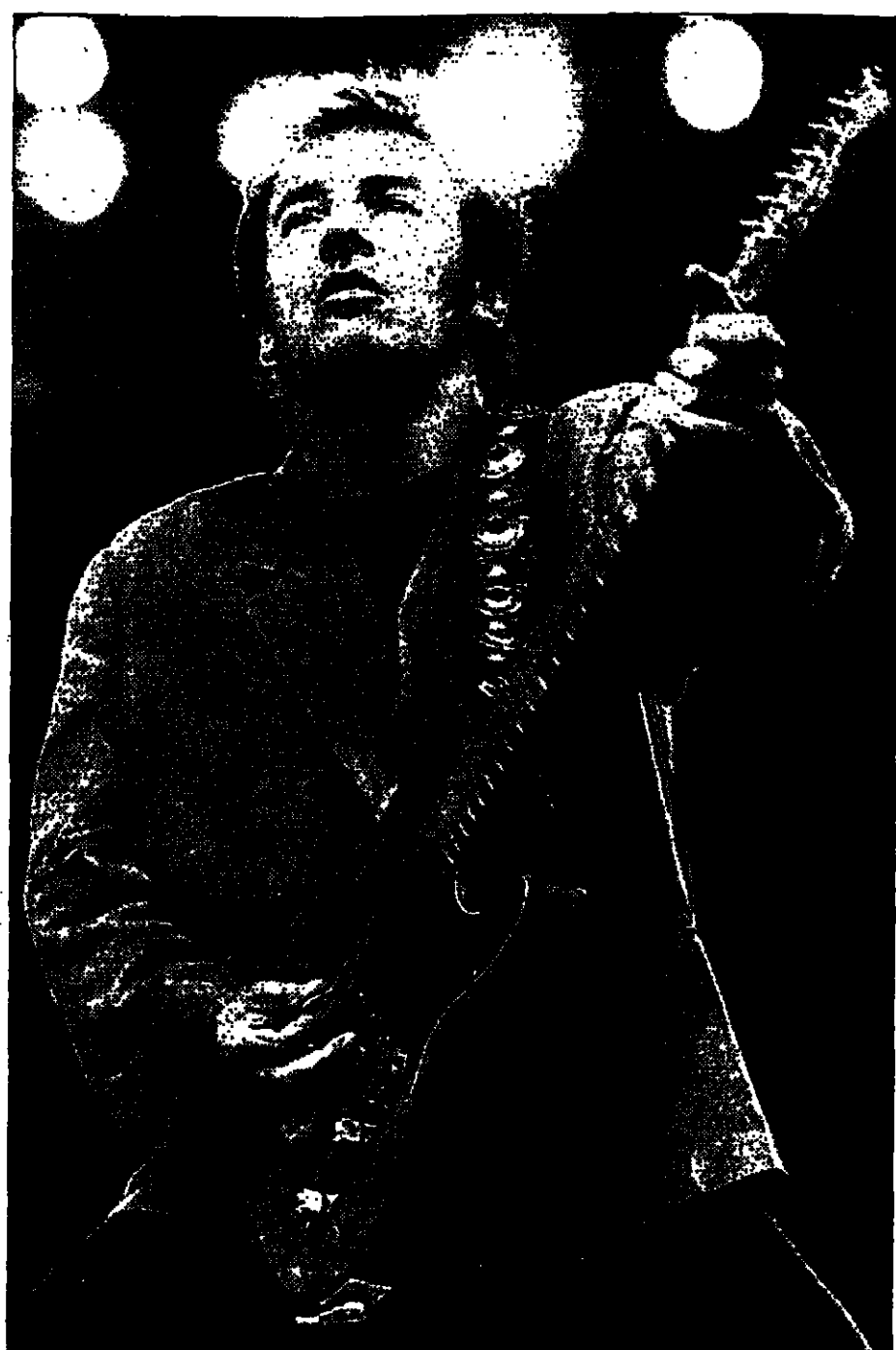
furnishes a rich, Duane Eddy-style twang. Apart from a couple of tracks which hark back to the overblown "showband" sound of the *Born To Run* era — "Roll of the Dice" and "Real World" — the instrumentation is strong but economical, ranging from the rocky tumble of "All or Nothing at All" to the quietly philosophical "With Every Wish", where a sparse arrangement is delicately coloured by the dappled tones of Mark Isham's muted trumpet.

As one might expect in the wake of recent personal upheavals, the mood of the album is complex and contradictory, though its principal theme is the ever-shifting and frequently painful course of true love. On some tracks he is in a bullish mood: on "Man's Job" he insists that "Tak'n care of you darlin' ain't for one of the boys."

But more often the songs betray feelings of vulnerability, self-doubt and, on "I Wish I Were Blind", old-fashioned jealousy. "Built a roadside carnival out of hurt and self-pity," he sings in "Real World". "It was all wrong, well now I'm movin' on."

Lucky Town is both shorter (10 tracks; 39 minutes) and sharper than his companion. Here Springsteen plays all the instruments himself, apart from the drums (Gary Mallabar), and the album is dominated by an even more basic, guitar-driven sound.

Of the two it is *Lucky Town* which has the edge. Opening with the gloriously optimistic flourish of "Better Days" and followed by the rumpus, similarly positive title track, the album sounds like the work of a man waking from a bad



Featured on guitar: Bruce Springsteen during his last British tour, in 1988

dream. In "Local Hero" he takes a wry tilt at the impossible extremes of adulation and antipathy which a performer at his level has to face: "First they made me pope/Then they brought the rope."

A string of warm, idealised love songs is interrupted by a desert-baked Ry Cooder-ish number called "The Big Muddy". Springsteen again displaying his previously unsuspected reserves as a guitarist. "There ain't no one leavin' this world buddy/Without their shrunken dirty/Or their hands bloody," he declares with grim satisfaction.

Clearly Springsteen is not, and doubtless never has been, the paragon of virtue that might have been suggested by earlier publicity and accepted by the credulous. But his skill and honesty as a writer and performer continue to shine through in his music, regardless. If any of his fans are foolish enough to desert him over these two albums, it is they who will be the losers.

And his mother came on, too

DANCE

Modern Masterpiece
Nottingham

MICHAEL CLARK has never been a blushing violet, and the title of his new work premiered at Nottingham Playhouse, *Modern Masterpiece*, implies that he will never be accused of excessive modesty. But he can justify that title by the fact that at its centre is Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. It would be interesting to know how different this treatment is from what might have emerged if Clark had completed Peter Schaufuss's commission to stage *Rite* for English National Ballet two years ago.

With a cast of only four dancers, Clark has to make them work hard; presumably in consequence, there is an unprecedented intermission between Stravinsky's two scenes. However, with a prologue to music by Public Image Ltd, the first half runs nearly half-an-hour, and the second half is slightly longer, with an epilogue to music by T. Rex, Stephen Sondheim and The Sex Pistols.

Frequent changes of costume, mood and background during *Rite* build up an expectation of fragmentation. Consequently, this heterogeneous mixture seems less discordant than you might expect.

The choreography mixes a sinuous plasticity on the one hand with hard-hitting rock mannerisms on the other, but builds them all on a balletic foundation, shown more in Clark's opening third position pose and his *ports de bras* than in Matthew Hawkins's dancing in pointe shoes, impressive as that is. There are allusions also to Nijinsky's original choreography for *Rite*.

But he subverts this by gestures such as clutching his groin in apparent desire, and by having Joanne Barrett paint on a Hitler moustache and slanting lock of hair for her tumultuously powerful solo as the Sacrifice. This crescendo of painful feeling and overwhelming energy rightly brought cheers from an excited audience.

This Hitler allusion may be

an attack on the music, or on the original ballet's social assumptions. Perhaps it is just Clark's little joke, like his following "Send in the Clowns" solo, danced near-nude in front of an enlargement of the *Mona Lisa*.

Julie Hood, a faithful Clark interpreter in fine form, is the fourth dancer, and Clark's mother (aged 68) makes a decidedly startling appearance as the Elder. Leigh Bowers's costumes have some witty touches (even the lavatory seats worn as collars in one sequence) and his own on-stage interventions are kept within bounds except for one pointless obscenity.

Perhaps Clark is pointing a parallel between the aggressive figure of Stravinsky 80 years ago and the similar quality in today's pop music. The irreverent rudeness and energy of Clark's work appeal to a young audience nourished on pop videos; but he also has an originality and inventiveness rare in choreography. A potent mixture.

JOHN PERCIVAL



Michael Clark: never a blushing violet

Signs of self doubt

CONCERT

Brindisi Quartet
BBC Concert Hall

MARK-ANTHONY Turnage used to be known as the chap who made all the loud noises: the opera *Greek*, the orchestral work (shortly to appear on an EMI CD single) *Three Screaming Popes*, and so on. But he seems to have consciously calmed his music down. His new string quartet called "Are you sure?" was given its world premiere between Mozart's D minor Quartet, K421 and Janáček's "Intimate Letters" by the excellent Brindisi Quartet, before an invited radio audience on Wednesday.

What exactly is meant by its title remains as yet a mystery, since audiences at these concerts are not afforded the luxury of programme notes. But the beginning of the piece, a thoroughly romantic cadenza for first violin — beautifully played by Jacqueline Shaw — immediately suggests indecision in its straightforward opposition of major and minor modes. It sets the scene for a work written in frankly and unexpectedly derivative, soft and touchingly sincere manner.

The most obvious models are Tippett's earlier quartets, suggested by the strongly linear writing and the harmonic and rhythmic language. But its ancestry possibly goes back further, to Dvořák. There is the same feeling of space, of free-ranging lyricism and of sheer richness.

Turnage is unafraid to make his phrases echo each other literally, to repeat an assertive rhythmic motif, or to use common or garden chordal progressions. And at the climax, quite possibly at the root of the single-movement piece, is something that sounds like a Negro spiritual coming sadly home to its rest.

Turnage has apparently been engaging in some tough self-questioning about how his music should be. It would be a pity if the influences apparent in this work were to preoccupy him for too long. He is at his best when he involves himself in tougher argument, challenging as well as beguiling his audience. Even though it contains beautiful things, this quartet wallowed rather than explored.

STEPHEN PETTIT

Norman and Sandra do it their way

THEATRE

Playing Sinatra
Greenwich

brother whose blubbery facade turns out to conceal a full set of teeth.

At two and a half hours, the

to Norman, and probably thinks she means it, she is making enquiries about house prices at the estate agents and even acquiring the occasional admirer. One of these, an aspiring guru called Phillip, she proceeds to bring home and shower with her savings. Needless to say, that is not to the liking of a

play is too long and, in spite of a twist in the tail, rather predictable and repetitive as well. What carries it through is partly Kops's crisp, brisk dialogue, partly the calibre of Ted Craig's cast. Stefan Bednarczyk, playing Phillip, admittedly has little to do but spout New Age platitudes in the maddeningly bland, calm

tones of New Age sages. But Susan Brown deftly catches Sandra's frustration, and Ian Gelder's Norman brings a necessary danger to the proceedings. He suggests that this overage Billy Bunter, gurgling, flying into tantrums, then scuttling off to the kitchen like an alarmed beetle, would do anything to protect his creature comforts; and that keeps the audience's nerve-ends on edge too.

But what of Sinatra? Well, Kops tells us in the programme that his "subtle blend of despair and ridiculous optimism", his "humour,chutzpah and sprauch", his ability simultaneously to be "human, confident, fallible and lost" converted him, Kops, from an embattled, angry anarchist he now is. That strikes me as a bit over the top. But it is the sort of liberation that the old crooner is presumably meant to offer these trapped people, too.

At any rate, *You Make Me Feel So Young*, *Fairy Tales Can Come True* and other such romantic numbers lazily drift across Michael Pavella's cluttered drawing-room set, with its dangling lamps and Warhol-like montages of Sinatra himself. They tantalise poor Sandra, work in ironic counterpoint to Norman's emotional stodge — and, not least, give us in the audience a nice mini-concert, too.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



Trapped in a time warp: Susan Brown and Ian Gelder

New York Theatre: Holly Hill reports on two musical successes and a revival that seems to have failed

Whether there is more dancing on the stage of *Crazy For You* (Shubert Theatre), *The Most Happy Fella* (Booth Theatre), or along the Great White Way itself, is a debatable point. The two musicals, opening six days apart, have been greeted as artistic and commercial triumphs. Both shows are brimming with buoyancy and joy.

Ken Ludwig has created in *Crazy For You* an engagingly ingenious new book. For George and Ira Gershwin's 1930 hit *Girl Crazy*, keeping the show in period, Ludwig has a banking scion (who would rather be a Broadway hoofer) go to a sleepy Nevada town to foreclose its theatre's mortgage. He falls for the theatre owner's daughter, and impersonates a Ziegfeld-like impresario to put on a show that will save the theatre and revive the town.

Director Mike Ockrent and

Joy returns along with classic Gershwin songs

choreographer Susan Stroman suffuse the action with vitality and inventive touches that make the Gershwin songs (five from the original show, others folded in) seem like new. Classics include "Bidin' My Time", "Someone To Watch Over Me", "But Not For Me", and "Nice Work If You Can Get It". Robin Wagner's sets, William Ivey Long's costumes and Paul Gallo's lighting evoke New York glitter and Nevada desert, culminating in a stunning finale with an art deco background, the dancing sweethearts garbed like Fred and Ginger.

The *Most Happy Fella* is a revival that began in Connecticut's Goodspeed Opera House

last summer. Its novelty is the absence of an orchestra: instead, arrangements that the composer Frank Loesser made for two pianos are used. The pianos and absence of miked singing are wonderful in the intimate Booth Theatre.

Distinguishing this revival are director Gerald Gutierrez's daring choices for the leading roles. Tony, the fiftyish California farmer who sends the photo of his handsome foreman to woo a San Francisco waitress to become his mail-order bride, is played by Spiro Malas. He appears overweight, awkward, sweating and physically unappealing. The miracle of his performance is that Tony's sweet

soul gradually overcomes all, so that the audience can fall in love with him as does his bride.

Sophie Hayden is not the pretty ingenue usually hired for *Rosabella* but a shopworn young woman with no options left. Her surprise and gratitude at discovering kindness, friendship and then love are enormously touching. By the time that Malas and Hayden sing "My Heart Is So Full Of You", Loesser's melodic variation on the classic tale of Beauty and the Beast has woven its enduring magic.

Less luck for Tim Rice's reworking of *Chess*, produced Off-Broadway by The Artists Perspective, a new group de-

voted to undiscovered or neglected musicals. Setting the action in 1972 during the Cold War, Rice has played down the political aspects and focuses on American Freddy and Russian Anatoly, both obsessed with chess.

New York critics were almost as unkind to the reworking as to the Broadway *Chess*, not even giving minimal credit to the score as a great showcase for musical theatre singers — in this production Kathleen Rowe McAllen as Florence, J. Mark McVey as Anatoly, Ray Walker as Freddy, and Jan Horvath in the expanded role of Svetlana.

Casting my vote on the three versions of *Chess*, I opt for London's physical production (especially the opening chess ballet), the love story and the original trio of actors on Broadway, and the mostly sung-through streamlining of Rice's new book.

Tales of nymphs and shepherds

OPERA

Il pastor fido
RCOM

THE London Handel Festival has brought the capital an annual feast of music by that composer for 15 years now. One remembers with gratitude fine performances of works both familiar and unfamiliar.

However, since the demise of the Handel Society in the Eighties, nobody has been staging Handel operas regularly in this country. Now the LHF has taken the innovative step of presenting a Handel opera on the stage, in collaboration with the Royal College of Music's Opera School.

The choice is a slightly curious one. *Il pastor fido* was, in the words of one Handel-an, "largely cobbled together from earlier pieces and had an unpromising libretto by a bungling writer". Nor is it blessed with a great deal of Handel's most inspired music. On the other hand, as a modest pastoral opera demanding only one basic set and a small cast of six, it is a work that recommends itself in straitened times and to student forces.

The tangled skein of love, both required and unrequited, takes some unravelling, and the barrier erected in front of the audience when the opera is given in a foreign language robbed the production of a good deal of immediacy. But that was not the only problem, since the producer, Ceri Sherlock, had been unable to persuade these student singers to move with any real dramatic conviction.

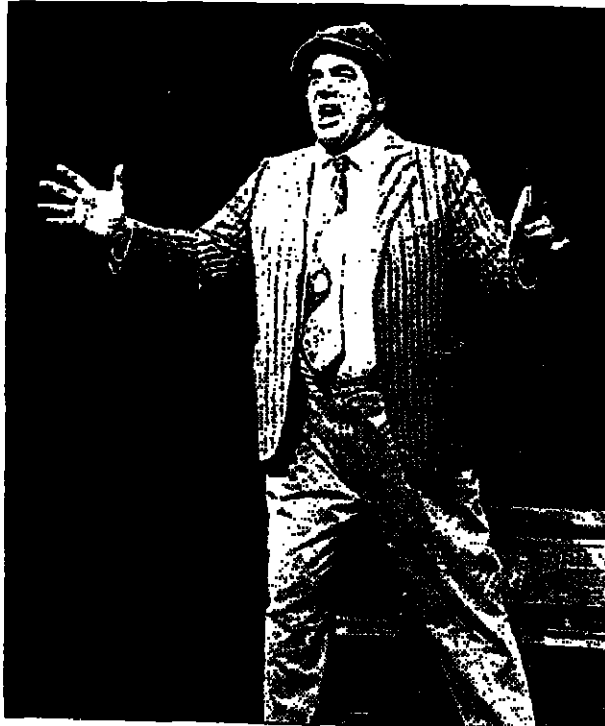
There were, however, one or two nice touches, as when the scheming nymph, Eurilla (played by Marianne Haggren) threw off her fake mourning robes to dance a little jig of triumph. Her short-lived victory is that of consigning her rival, Amarilli, to execution for enjoying illicit love in the face of a stern decree.

The Act III duet for Amarilli and her lover, Mirtillo, sung under the shadow of the axe is one of the highlights of the work. It brought together the two most promising singers of this cast, Jill-Maria Marsden and Marie Vassiliou, both moulding their phrases to expressive effect and thoroughly at home in the style.

Judy Slater also deserves an honorable mention for her Dorinda. Her performance was not least impressive in the moving aria she sings after having the misfortune to be shot with an arrow fired by the man she loves.

The first of the four performances — the run ends tonight — was conducted by Denys Darlow. His brisk tempi and taut rhythms give the show such momentum as it has.

BARRY MILLINGTON



Winning Spiro Malas in *The Most Happy Fella*

Blasts from the past

Jonathan Meades revisits two ageing London beauties and finds them distinctly faded

In the mid 1970s I saw Sir Alec Guinness consummately evoke bitterly cold weather and the prospect of having to go outside into frost and a nor'easter that would hammer a head. He achieved this with a gesture of extraordinary economy, wrapping a scarf around his neck with a mix of resignation and derring do. This was in Julian Mitchell's adaptation of Ivy Compton-Burnett's *A Family and a Fortune* at some theatre on Shaftesbury Avenue.

In the mid 1980s I saw Sir John Gielgud consummately evoke what it is to have lunched very well. Again economy was the key, and a single-mindedness of purpose. But whereas Sir Alec was fleet, understated, naturalistic, Sir John was more classically histrionic, more actorish. He was called upon to move from the door of a restaurant to the door of a waiting Rolls Royce. Walk is not the right word — he made a progress, stately and contented and very grand indeed. The progress spoke not only of a fine lunch but of a fine lunch taken in another era — wherever it was that elegance was paramount and time of no importance. This was not in a theatre, this was in the four yards between L'Étoile and the kerb of Charlotte Street's pavement in Fitzrovia or North Soho or wherever it's presently called. Like most people, I suspect, I had not previously associated Sir John with street theatre; but his *plein-air* rendition of *The Sybarite's Progress To His Chariot* (Lord Leighton would do the painting) made me think again.

It also made me think that L'Étoile must be something really very special. Though I guess that the idea of the place rather than its putative actuality was more potent, more appealing. I suspect now that L'Étoile itself agrees. Each table is provided with a brochure boasting about its illustrious past, its patrons, its longevity — *né 1904*. Look up from the bathos of the brochure and what do you find? You find an aged gaily girl of a restaurant, paint slapped across the cracks, gamely refusing to give in to seediness but reluctant to have a full face-job. You find a few half-fell businessmen. You find a load of maroon. Indeed amateurs of all maroon's gradations will find L'Étoile most satisfying: the source of the colour (*maroon*, chestnut) may be absent but there's a vinous cum cherry lincrusta dado, there's



the claret patterned carpet, there are the waiters' jackets. All the fabrics and soft furnishings have it goes without saying, seen better days. Then there's the wine itself. That's maroon too: mostly French, posh bottles a specialty, not overpriced, though many bins not available. Non maroon items include, as well as white wine, a glass screen etched with champagne bottles in buckets, a wrought metal object which holds 150-centilime, i.e. double size — bottles of alcohols blancs, a bar with a nest of grubby wire baskets on it. The trolleys are brown — of course there are trolleys. 1904 is not summoned up, but 1954 is.

It's more difficult to put a date on the style of cooking — a throwback, certainly, but to when? And to where? I suppose the same date will do — mid 1950s, Mendes-France's France. What L'Étoile offers is a version of pre-nouvelle French restaurant cuisine — perhaps. Equally, in finesse, if not in repertoire, it's akin to solid British provincial hotel cooking of a slightly later period. It does this cooking competently. Tripes à la mode de Caen — an uncharacteristically bourgeois item — are not bad at all. Tournedos is respectable meat, served with the worst of garnish of a crenellated, half-roasted tomato, decent pommes alouettes and inoffensive sauté potatoes. Scallops are done in fish-pie white sauce,

with browned mash, in the shell. Modern cooking, *pace* Sir Kingsley Amis who is an assiduous plunger of the place, is so much better.

The first courses from one of the squad of trolleys were the sorts of dish that brain-dead girls who have not secured royal or at least titled husbands might serve at ambitious dinner parties — poached salmon mixed up with spud, mayo and haricots verts; dressed crab; kipperish herrings in olive oil. The cheeses are poor — industrialised lactic grot that anyone in central London can not only avoid but must make a special effort to find. The waiters are by Otto Dix. Tip generously out of guilt.

At the end of their dinner at the next table to us in L'Épiqueure the father of a French family said to his wife and daughters: "OK. On va manger dans un restaurant français." I have not made this up. My wife will bear witness. Most of the seats in this other blast from the past were occupied by a Spanish party. No wonder the rest of Europe still believes that London eats disgustingly.

Two doors from L'Étoile is Richard Neat's Pied à Terre. A hundred yards from L'Épiqueure is Alastair Little's restaurant. Both are cheaper than L'Étoile or L'Épiqueure. Their waiting staffs are not dressed in stained nylon. Mr Neat and Mr

Little have all the culinary gifts. Their food is fresh. They do not take short-cuts. But they are not part of the system. Perhaps they have only themselves to blame for not greasing porters and hotel desks for not greasing the right side of the despicable English Tourist Board into whose Paris office a friend of mine wandered a couple of years ago and was offered a list of London restaurants that would have been *view-jex* in 1975.

L'Épiqueure was probably among them. Its exterior is terrific: 12 feet above the ground burn torches, horizontal in a good night wind. They're gay (old sense); they carry no Nuremberg terror. They're not so fine as an advertisement as Sir John Gielgud but they are always there. The interior is cosy. The waiters wear maroon or black. Most of them are played by Peter Lorre. Their portraits are Otto Dix's greater contemporary Christian Schad — though if there was a Schad today, in London, he would not be looking here for his subjects.

L'Épiqueure doesn't really have anything much to do with London in the 1990s. It belongs to the parallel city of polyglot coach tours. Big Ben, the Tower of London (dig those crazy ravens), there are some good wines including a Bandol called Chateau de Pibarnon whose '85 vintage is worth a try. There is a daily menu of things such as duck confit with lentils and lamb rack.

But they're beside the point — which is old Soho International Cooking. Asparagus with Hollandaise is perfect. Harengs à la suédoise comprises two sorts of off the peg herring, one sweet, the other salt, neither much cop — loads of garnish though and a glass of caraway-flavoured spirit thrown in. Beef stroganoff and lobster Newbourg — the meat and the crustacean are brought from the kitchen for inspection before they're cooked. When served to you, transformed, they're both pretty terrible: greasy meat, heavy fish. It's as though they'd been carried without spoons.

Coffee is served in a stupidly fancy retort. There were slip ups in the service — e.g. the delivery of the wrong sort of spinach (leaf rather than creamed) — which were not worth complaining about. By some miracle the cheeses appear to be supplied by the naïf corner shop that does L'Étoile's. Every strawberry served from the sweet trolley is what the legendary Jules Lagrange would call a Berdolph's Nose.

L'Étoile
30 Charlotte Street, London W1 (071-636 7189)
Lunch and dinner Mon to Fri. £90.
L'Épiqueure
28 Frith Street, London W1 (071-437 2829)
Lunch Mon to Fri, dinner Mon to Sat. £85.

JONATHAN MEADES'S RESTAURANT GUIDE

Marks — up to a maximum of ten — are awarded for cooking and although they are intended to reflect value for money they are not determined by this consideration alone: certain very costly restaurants are very good, certain very cheap ones, too. All prices given are approximate — they are for a three-course meal for two, including modest wine and an aperitif. Dishes are mentioned only as an indication of the repertoire. Never be afraid to complain. Phone first. It is not only discourteous but illegal to dishonour bookings: that goes for restaurants as well as customers. J.M.

THAI

Thai Pavilion
42 Rupert Street, London W1 (071-287 6333)
Elegant premises, variable cooking. Chicken in pandan leaves is worth investigation and so is the green soup. Better give a miss to the grossly battered deep fried veg and the indifferently sauté. Service is rather chaotic and very slow. £34 plus. Lunch and dinner every day.

Chaoanya
22 St Christopher's Place, London W1 (071-406 0777)
Cavernous Thai basement. The spicing is ferocious. Be warned. Much of the cooking is good — Chinese sausage salad, beef with hot basil and noodles etc. £42 plus. Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat.

Thai Pepper
115 Finchley Road, London NW3 (071-722 0026/8470)
Competent but hardly exciting cooking

EASTERN EUROPE

The Navigator
Polish Air Force Club, 14 Collingham Gardens, London SW5 (071-370 1229)
Like most eastern and central European clubs in London it is done out in naugahyde and plastic wood: if you like Ladas you'll enjoy its lumpy utilitarianism. The only decoration is an abstract mural of daunting dimensions and a series of photos of Polish fighter squadrons. The menu is predictable — bigos, stuffed cabbage, tripe etc. It's all done to a pretty sound standard and portions are gargantuan. Potato and walnut *lakes* and *pirogi* are recommended. £25-£30. Lunch and dinner Tues-Sun.

Wodka
12 St Albans Grove, London W8 (071-937 6513)
Smart and fashionable joint serving rather elevated Polish and Russian dishes. The decorative style is industrial chic. The wines are mostly New World, the flavoured vodkas are trad. The cooking is well-gauged: *pirogi* of sauerkraut and mushrooms, *zabielak* of salmon, *fiszkas*, black pudding. Groovy staff, cool customers. £50-£100. Lunch, Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat, brunch on Sunday.

Danipole
20 Thurloe Street, London SW7 (071-589 6117)
Legendary Polish tea-room and restaurant that has been a home for generations of émigrés. Horribly cooking at astonishingly low prices: *borscht*, *chłodnik*, *pirogi*, stuffed cabbage, herring with sour cream, nice cakes. Drink lemon tea or Tatra beer. £18 plus. Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner every day.

Lowiczanka
238-246 King Street, London W6 (081-741 3225)
The restaurant of the Polish Social and Cultural Centre. A bit like an anonymous 1960s hotel in Lodz. The clientele is largely composed of Polish families. They are served by matronly ladies in "authentic" costume. The food is cop-

opposite the Swiss Cottage. £40 plus. Lunch Wed-Fri, dinner every day.

Sri Siam
14 Old Compton Street, London W1 (071-434 3544)
Thai cooking done with European flair — and all the better for it. The restaurant is long, narrow, noisy. The cooking, with the exception of basic staples, is well done — tempura of vegetables, fine fishcakes, marvellous "red" curry, grilled beef with coriander and mint. £50-£55. Lunch Mon-Sat, dinner every day.

Baba Thai
21a Frith Street, London W1 (071-437 8504)
Charmless, gloomy but commendable because the cooking of standard issue dishes is sound and because the menu goes way beyond the usual repertoire into trolley dishes and offal dishes. The green curry is probably the finest in London. No one should drink wine with Thai food but in case someone should want to there is a singularly impressive list. Without wine: £42. Lunch and dinner every day.

ous — tripe, stuffed cabbage, cured sausage, potato pancakes, sweet pancakes. There are numerous flavoured vodkas to choose from, and there's Tatra beer. £22 plus. Lunch and dinner every day.

The Hungry Hussar
3a Downshire Hill, London NW3 (071-435 3544)
The Gay Hussar's offspring in Hampstead. The premises are engaging and the Hungarian cooking, while it has rougher edges than that of the older restaurant, is ample, warming, generally pretty pleasant. Goose with *schotel* (beans and grains) is worth trying and so is the skin of the roast duck; but its crispness is achieved at the cost of overcooking the actual meat. Cold *pilaf* may be boring, but its beerroot sauce is interesting. Poppy seed strudel is an astounding concoction for the sweet-toothed. Three-course set meal. £8 (lunch), £11 per head (dinner): à la carte for two, £50-plus. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sat.

Oleki's
43 Crawford Street, London W1 (071-724 8228/6757)
Russian basement full of nesting dolls, sunnys and a Eurasian uniformed waiter in knee boots. The cooking is interesting in a *Look At Life* way, but it's not much fun to eat. There's an Armenian dish which is like an educationally subnormal Spanish omelette topped with burnt grass, rather unpleasant meat balls with apricots in the centre, solid *borscht*. There is a wide selection of vodkas and Russian wines — which carry the same warning as the food. £40 plus. Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner every day.

Ognisko Polskie
55 Prince's Gate, Exhibition Road, London SW7 (071-639 4635)
The restaurant of the Polish Hearth Club is open to non-members and serves excellently prepared traditional dishes such as tripe in the Warsaw manner, potato pancakes with sour cream, wild mushrooms, sauerkraut, flavoured vodkas. The décor has been modernised a bit and you now believe yourself in Gdansk in the 1950s. £25 plus. Lunch and dinner every day.

KIND FOOD: ALISON JOHNSON

Unfair deal for mothers

MOTHERING Sunday is coming up. The human mother has at least some chance of having her wishes about how and where she gives birth respected, but what of the chances of farm animal mothers?

The answer is dismal, and getting worse. Since a proper understanding of selective breeding arose in the 18th century, animals have been profitable only precisely because their breeding is managed on "sausage machine" principles, producing a maximum number of meaty offspring in strictly controlled situations.

But during the last few decades things have deteriorated rapidly to a stage where acceptance must be questioned. Not only can the battery hen no longer rear chicks, she cannot lay her eggs in privacy, or brood them, even for a minute. The dairy cow is parted from her calf after a few days. The sow is confined from before farrowing to weaning in a metal cage where she cannot turn or reach her piglets.

Curiously, two people in the past week have told me that this farrowing pen is humane, because it prevents the sow accidentally crushing her piglets and therefore saves lives. I would say, rather, that it saves bacon — profits.

Even if you feel these routine abuses are justified by the need to save farming incomes and to feed the country cheaply, it is hard to accept the way profitable animal breeding is heading.

The British Veterinary Association's Council asked recently: "Why is it that we subject an animal to a procedure to make it breed rather than in the way it is totally capable of breeding?" They were referring to embryo transfer: the practice of implant-

ing dairy cows with embryos of beef breeds, bigger than their natural offspring, necessitating frequent Caesarean operations and the use of "calving aids", which look fitted for the torture chamber of the Inquisition. Embryo transfer is gaining ground for sheep, too.

On a happier note: today's schoolchildren are said to be showing growing concern about how food animals are reared. Try to keep your patience if this takes the form of reading the egg-cartons aloud disapprovingly when you collapse back home exhausted amid a heap of shopping.

It may make more work to answer youthful demands for vegetarian or free-range food; but as they are the parents and shoppers of tomorrow, it is a worthwhile ethical investment.

For the moment, though, let's forget hard work. Here is a sweet even young child — can make for Mothering Sunday, as no cooking is involved.

Mother's Day ice cream treat
serves 6
2-3 heaped tsp instant coffee
3tsp sugar
2tbsp brandy (optional)
large packet (300g) ginger nuts or crunchy biscuits
500ml ice cream — mother's favourite flavour

Put coffee and sugar in a mug and fill it halfway with hot water. Stir to dissolve. Add brandy if used. Find a loaf tin 23cm x 12cm or an 18cm cake tin. Dip each biscuit in coffee mixture while you count to three and place in the tin to cover the bottom and sides. Put ice cream in the middle and cover with more dipped biscuits. Freeze for at least one hour. To turn out, dip the bottom of the tin in warm water for ten seconds.

New stocks are now available of this century's greatest vintage. Buy now is Jane MacQuitty's recommendation

The jury is still out as to whether the exceptional 1990 red burgundy vintage is finer than that of the magnificent 1988s. The 1990s' claim to greatness, just like that of the 1988s, is not in doubt. Wine traders on both sides of the Channel are convinced that they are dealing with a first-class, once-in-a-lifetime vintage. I am, too.

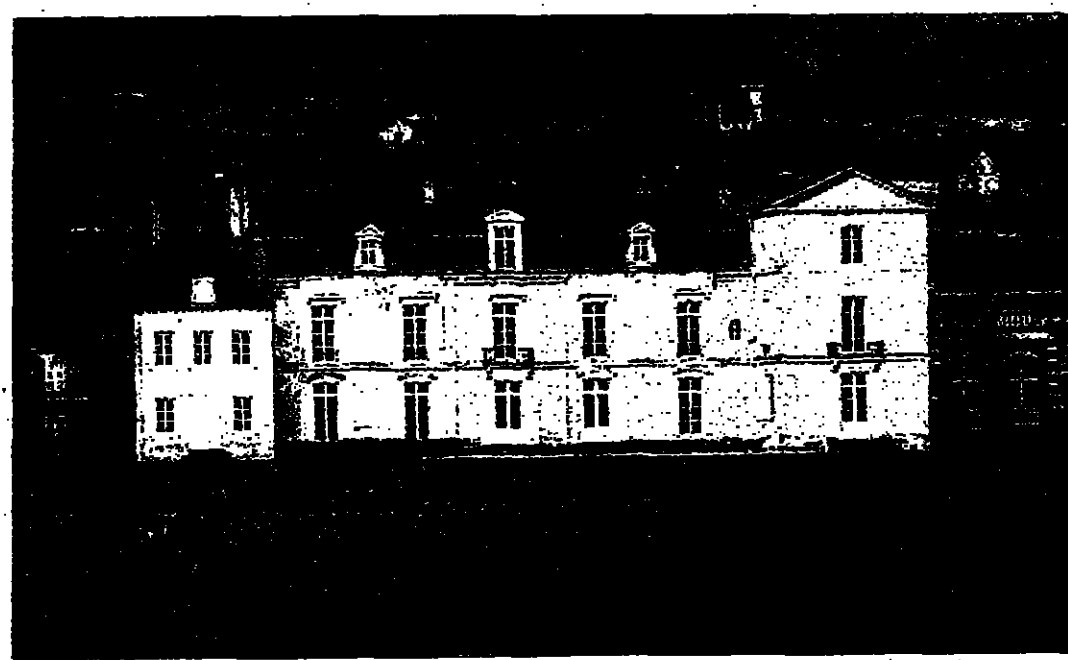
What is in question is which vintage has the edge: the classic 1988s or the rare 1990s? Britain's burgundy specialists are already equally divided between the two. The Wine Society puts the 1990s just ahead. Master of Wine Adam Bancroft says it is the best of the four fine vintages of the previous decade, and Bibendum rates it as the best since 1978; only Justerini & Brooks and Domaine Direct, it seems, feel that the quality of the 1988 reds make it the better year.

When I first wrote about the 1990 burgundies in January, only two merchants in Britain had the vintage. Now, three more have just released the top wines listed right. They are not in abundant supply, so my advice to burgundy lovers is to buy now at the *en primeur*, or early, still-in-cask stage while there are still stocks of these first-class reds about.

But what is all the fuss about? Why cannot Burgundy have produced two truly great vintages so close together? For a start, the unique and fragile combination of the right climate, soil, grape variety and winemaker happens, on average, about once every four years. It is just not possible in Burgundy's cool, northern climate, unlike in Bordeaux, to produce great wines every year.

Also the 1988 and 1990 red burgundies are quite different. 1988 was a classic, almost typical top vintage, with lashings of ripe, red fruit, colour, tannin, structure

Burgundy's bumper crops



Rich pickings: the Meursault vineyard and chateau in Burgundy is at the heart of the Côte de Beaune

and finesse. 1990, by comparison, is a freak year. This was the vintage that the Wine Society buyers dubbed an enigma and took three visits to Burgundy to sort out.

Unlike the 1988s traditional style and flavours, the tiny, super-ripe, thick-skinned 1990 pinot noir grapes produced freak wines with intense, extra ripe, concentrated fruit and high alcohol levels, yet with the necessary under-pinnings for balance of tannin and acidity.

Instead of the classic pinot noir taste of cherry, plum and damson, the 1990s reek of extra ripe, black fruit flavours like blackcurrant and blackberry.

At times, too, the top 1990s are so rich and heady in flavour that they remind me of *crème de mûre*, or cassis, blackberry or blackcurrant liqueur. Quite unheard of in my experience, from a region renowned for its pale, delicate red wines.

vines still had the ability to produce great wine.

Pascal Marchand, from the distinguished Clos des Epeneaux estate in Pommard, was able to make as much as 46 hectolitres of great wine in 1990, compared to his usual 35 in 1988. Even 1990's humble bourgogne rouge wines produced at the better estates — which are usually made from lesser vats and parcels of wines — are often first class and represent extraordinarily good value for money.

Indeed, the Wine Society's buyers went so far as to compare the best bourgogne rouge, domaine-bottled wines with the second wines of classed growth Bordeaux chateaux.

Getting to grips with the remarkable 1990s has a lot to do with understanding the year's weather pattern. After a mild winter and early, warm spring — encouraging rapid and very abundant vine growth — came the hot and not unexpected early, dry summer. Rain early on eased the drought but, happily, the long, uneven flowering tempered yields and ensured a later harvest.

Further help was given in the shape of a green harvest when *vignerons* snip unripe bunches from their vines. The heat continued throughout the summer producing small pinot noir grapes with thick, pigment-heavy skins and both whites and reds with good sugar levels. Rain again in September helpfully plumped up the parched grapes and pushed up their acidity levels, but did not dilute their concentration. Good weather during the picking ensured that healthy, ripe grapes were harvested.

Only a decade or slightly less in the cellar will tell whether the 1990 reds will triumph over the 1988s. My own hunch is that the classic 1988s will have the edge.

Having said that, there is plenty of vintage evidence in Bordeaux and Burgundy, where freak years like 1945 and 1947 turned out to be the vintages of the century. Despite the general agreement among the Burgundians about the lacklustre "qualities" of the 1991 vintage, prices are still appealingly low for the 1990s: down to the same level as the 1988 reds.

For once the recession cloud here and in France has a silver lining.

Best buys

● 1990 Aney Duresces, Claude Maréchal & Sandeman, 301 Fulham Road, SW10, £78
Not the best value bottle from Monsieur Maréchal, but an impressive chunky, blackberry and redcurrant mouthful all the same.

● 1990 Fommard, Clos des Epeneaux, 1er Cru, Comte Armand, Lea & Sandeman, £205
Intense, intoxicating, spicy cassis and blackberry flavours stemming from new oak and an ultra-ripe year make this one of the best.

● 1990 Bourgogne Cuvée Chamarie Adam Bancroft, 4-7 Great Pultney Street, W1, £58
Elegant, beefy-savoury flavours backed up by ripe, sweet, almost glycerine-like fruit.

● 1990 Côte de Nuits Villages, Bertrand Ambroise Adam Bancroft, £73
Massive, silky-spicy style at a keen price.

● 1990 Gevrey-Chambertin, Estournelles St Jacques, 1er Cru, Esmonin Adam Bancroft, £151
Delicious sweet, ripe, blackberry and damson fruit coupled with the scent of roses and a very dark colour put Esmonin at the top of the 1990 class.

● 1990 Bourgogne Rouge, Jean-Philippe Fichet Morris & Verdin, 28 Churton Street, SW1, £51
Plummy, morello and black cherry fruit mark another success for this humble appellation.

● 1990 Bourgogne Rouge, Les Bons Batons, Patrice & Michèle Rion Morris & Verdin, £57
Made from the Rions' own vines, not the family domaine's, this wonderful blackcurrant and blackberry-packed wine effortlessly demonstrates 1990's finesse.

● 1990 Vosne Romanée, Les Beaux Monts, 1er Cru, Domaine Rion Morris & Verdin, £217
Deep, purple black colour supported by lovely cassis, strawberry and blackberry fruit. A winner.

● 1990 Nuits St Georges, Clos des Argillères, 1er Cru, Domaine Rion Morris & Verdin, £217
Sandalwood, spice, cassis and strawberries combine to make this one of my favourite 1990s.

Prices quoted for these en primeur (still in cask) burgundies are per case in bond in London. Expect to pay duty, VAT and carriage.

Cheese st reluctant

Hedge and field fare

Frances Bissell,
The Times cook.

roots about for
fresh and green
country surprises

Recently I was sent a book which reminded me that spring is a good time to go foraging for wild green shoots and leaves to be picked for the soup pot and salad bowl, and flowers for glorious confections.

Suffolk Farm Feasts is published by the Suffolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, whose aim is to promote practical conservation on farmland and in the countryside (available from Juliet Hawkins, FWAC, c/o Maff, 100 Southgate, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 2BD, £6.50 plus £1 post and packing).

When foraging, it is important to avoid trespassing, to tread carefully and to pick leaves, flowers or shoots sparingly so that the plant colonies are not threatened by over-picking. It is also illegal to pick rare or protected plants. Other species may not be uprooted without the permission of the landowner.

That said, however, many of the best plants for eating, such as dandelions, docks, hawthorn and elder, grow in relative profusion. Only pick what you can be absolutely certain of identifying, well away from roadside verges and recently sprayed areas, and in any case wash your pickings well before cooking or eating raw.

It should be noted that certain plants derive their flavour from substances which, if taken in large quantities, may be harmful. Wood sorrel, for example, contains oxalic acid, which inhibits absorption of magnesium and calcium.

Hawthorn buds are among the first of the green things to pick. I can remember picking and eating them as "bread and cheese" on our way to school in Yorkshire. Dorothy Hartley's *Food in England* suggests mixing them with freshly made potato salad or beetroot salad. If the season is already well advanced in your part of the country, other wild greens can be substituted in the steamed pudding, as can chopped watercress for a very well-flavoured pudding.

Wild greens have a strong flavour, which I like to match with rice or pasta. Much chewier than a real risotto made with rice, the barley risotto is, nevertheless, a very good dish, inexpensive and sustaining. Mix the leaves, too, in a sharp, cleansing salad: dandelion, chicory, chickweed, plantain leaves, hawthorn, Good King Henry, watercress and Jack-by-the-Hedge can all be used.

I like to make the dressing with walnut or extra virgin olive oil and lemon or lime juice. A few crushed walnuts can be added if using walnut oil.

If, by chance, you have sown a wild flower patch in your garden, many of them can be turned into scented and coloured sugars for use in confectionery, particularly the violets, primroses and cowslips. The tiny wild pansy (or heartsease) makes a pretty addition to the wild green salad bowl, and violet leaves can also be used, cooked or in salads.

All the recipes can be adapted to the more domestic ingredients, since I have chosen ones that act as a vehicle to carry other flavours and ingredients: fritters, frittatas, risottos, tarts and steamed puddings.



DIANA LEADBETTER

will take whatever you want to give them in the way of herbs, fruit, flowers and vegetables.

To prepare the greens for the following recipes for cooked dishes, they should first be thoroughly washed in several changes of warm water and dried in a salad spinner. They are then blanched in boiling water for a minute or so after which they should be drained, rinsed and dried thoroughly.

Wild greens and barley risotto (serves 4 to 6)

1lb/455g prepared greens, such as nettles, Jack-by-the-Hedge, hogweed, Fat Hen, alexander stems, ground elder, chickweed
1 small onion or 2 shallots, peeled and chopped
2oz/60g butter
2tbsp olive oil
12oz/340g pearl barley
0.5pt/280ml white wine, boiling
1.5pt/850ml vegetable stock, boiling
salt
pepper
freshly grated parmesan cheese

First prepare the greens as

described. Chop them and put to one side. Gently fry the onion in half the butter and the oil and stir in the barley. Add half the wine and stir until absorbed, then add the rest and cook until it, too, has been absorbed. Continue then with the vegetable stock, adding a little at a time, stirring from time to time. After adding two or three batches of stock, stir in the greens and continue cooking until the barley is tender. Season to taste. When ready to serve, stir in the remaining butter and the parmesan.

A frittata of wild greens (serves 4)

0.5lb/230g wild greens, prepared as described
1tbsp olive oil
1oz/30g butter
6 free-range eggs
freshly ground black pepper

Chop the greens, and gently fry them for a few minutes in the oil and butter in an omelette pan. Lightly beat the eggs, with a little pepper, and pour over the greens. When the underside is set, turn the frittata over and cook briefly on the other side before sliding it on to a warm serving plate. Cheese can also be added to the beaten egg.

grated parmesan, crumbled blue cheese or diced mozzarella. Diced potatoes, fried in the pan before the greens, will turn this into a more substantial dish.

Another way of using eggs and greens is to line a flan ring with short pastry, parbake it blind, and when cool, put cooked greens in the bottom and pour well-seasoned, beaten eggs and milk over them before baking the tart.

Wilted dandelion salad

young dandelion leaves
1 rashers of smoked streaky bacon per person
freshly ground black pepper
wine or sherry vinegar

Wash the leaves in several changes of warm water and dry them in a salad spinner or clean tea towel. Place in the salad bowl. Fry the bacon until crisp and crumble over the salad. Pour the hot fat over the leaves and mix well, seasoning with pepper. Deglaze the frying pan with a splash of vinegar and stir in to the salad. Serve immediately before the bacon fat has had time to congeal.

In France and Belgium, dandelion is cultivated as a salad vegetable and often blanched to a spindly yellow plant. It is a favourite bistro

salad and is very often served with a poached egg on top.

Hawthorn pudding

(serves 4 to 6)

1lb/455g freshly made suet pastry
0.25lb/110g hawthorn buds
8 to 10 rashers smoked or green streaky bacon, rinds removed
freshly ground black pepper

Roll out the pastry into a rectangle. Cover with hawthorn buds, pressing them into the pastry. Lay the bacon rashers on top, in a single layer, slightly overlapping if necessary. Season with pepper. Roll up as if it were a Swiss roll, sealing the pudding with water along the open edge. Wrap it loosely in muslin and steam for one and a half to two hours. Serve hot and sliced. It is excellent with gravy from the Sunday joint, or left-over beef or game casserole.

Elderflower milk punch

(serves 4 to 6)

4 heads of elderflowers
1-2tbsp clear honey or sugar
half lemon, seeded and thinly sliced
3-4tbsp cognac
nutmeg
1pt/580ml milk

Strip the flowers from the stems. Rinse thoroughly, drain and put in a bowl with the honey, lemon slices and cognac. Scald the milk, and pour it over the ingredients in the bowl and leave to stand until cool. Strain into glasses and serve. It is also very good as a hot punch, but the flavours have longer to develop if the milk is allowed to cool.

Apple and elderflower fritters

(serves 4)

7oz/200g plain flour
pinch salt
2tsp fast-action yeast
1 free-range egg
0.25pt/140ml warm milk
1 apple, peeled and finely diced
grated zest of a lemon
1-2tsp lemon juice
2-3oz/60-85g elderflowers, stripped from their stalks
oil for frying
icing sugar for serving

Mix the dry ingredients and then beat in the egg and milk until you have a smooth, thick batter. Stir in the apple, lemon zest and juice and finally fold in the elderflowers. Heat the oil to 180C/350F and fry the fritters, scooping them off a dessertspoon, one at a time, until golden brown. Drain on paper towels and serve hot, dusted with icing sugar.

Elderflower cordial

2 lemons
2 limes
2oz/60g tartaric acid
10-12 elderflower heads
3lb/1.35g granulated sugar
3pt/1.70l water

Quarter the lemons and limes, squeeze the juice into a large bowl and add the skins, together with the tartaric acid and the well-washed and drained flower heads. Add the sugar and water, stir well, cover loosely and let it stand for 24 to 36 hours, stirring from time to time. Remove the lemon and lime pieces. Pour the flowers and liquid into a large saucepan and bring to the boil; hold for 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and allow to cool; strain into bottles.

Acid test for vinegars

Today's well-dressed salad spurns the common sprinkling of sunflower oil and wine vinegar in favour of more refined, designer flavours



Don't just say Sarsons: some of the more exotic flavours available

Simplicity has long since bypassed the Great British Salad. Where sprinkling Sarson's best vinegar mixed with sunflower oil once suited the conventional cos, such a culinary faux pas would now seem criminal for the likes of curly endive.

And as designer leaves demand only the most exotic of seasonings, it is now frowned on to amalgamate recherché oils such as truffle, walnut and pistachio with a mere "good" white wine vinegar—at the very least, balsamic (up to £80 a bottle for a 50-year-old brew from Modena) should play a part in the dressing game.

But balsamic, that inky-black, barrel-aged Italian vinegar which the Germans are fast elevating to cult status as a pick-up-or-digestif, is by no means the latest of speciality vinegars to grace the foodie's kitchen.

Supermarkets and leading restaurants are relishing the appearance of a range of exotic vinegars flavoured with fruit, nuts and herbs—and any good chef will have vanilla, horseradish, oranges or lemons on hand, let alone dill, champagne, plums and peanuts. Fashionable chefs are fast competing with each other to produce the most avant-garde concoctions, using a plain vinegar such as cider, wine or malt as a base. Flavouring a plain vinegar is simple. For a speedy fruit vinegar, liqueurise the fruit, add the vinegar and store in a sealed container. For herb vinegars, steep fresh sprigs in the vinegar and leave for several months.

If these flavours sound far too fancy for fish and chips, be assured that Sarson's new Lemon Malt vinegar is a tastier and healthier alternative to the non-brewed condiment. Indeed, according to the campaign for "Real Vinegar", run by the Vinegar Brewers' Federation, a chipper's malt is more often than not a concentrated and potentially hazardous chemical concoction which manufacturers derive from the refining of crude oil.

Proper, well-aged vinegar should be mild enough to sip neat, in the manner of the German gourmets.

and condiments similar to the chip shop's wine-soaking sundries have been banned in Italy and France because of their "unnatural" origins.

But dressing salads is a mere sideline as far as vinegar's versatility is concerned. As a flavour enhancer, it can provide an interesting and cheap alternative to stock or wine in stews and pot roasts, providing it is not used neat, since this will merely serve to preserve the meat, in the manner adopted by the early Romans.

Instead, use it as an essence, reduced with a chopped shallot to the point where the vinegar loses its "coughing kick"—the more exotically flavoured the vinegar used, the more unusual the resulting stew.

A drop of vanilla or coconut-flavoured vinegar will excite a curry, and pears pickled in distilled vinegar produce a supersweet, intensely flavoured fruit.

As a cheap rival to gravadlax, boned and skinned kippers marinated overnight with 4-6oz of red wine vinegar, 10fl oz of groundnut oil and 1-2 tablespoons of sugar results in a sweeter, non-acidic tasting, soft-fleshed fish. Teetotalers, wary of pricey designer vinegars, can adopt the Victorian practice of diluting a drop of blackcurrant, raspberry or gooseberry vinegar into plain water for a tasty drink. Sufferers from arthritis swear that Honegar (a blend of cider vinegar and pure unpasteurised honey) provides a natural and effective alternative to drug therapy. Vinegar dribbled into the bath helps to relieve dry skin.

But remember, vinegars can go off, warns Bill Grierson, the manufacturing manager of Neddle. "Treat them like a good wine: once opened, do not leave them mouldering in a cupboard."

LOUISE RODDON

Stockists of exotic vinegars: Martell, Natural Foods, Hoxton Hall, Northfield, Essex (0433 2254); Tom's, 226 Westbourne Grove, London W11 (071-221 8818); Carluccio's, 28a Neal Street, London WC2 (071-240 1487).

Cheese stalls the reluctant tax man

Joe Matthews was a high-flying tax inspector but decided to take a bite at cheese

Joe Matthews was once a research chemist and then a tax inspector. Now he wields a cheese-cutter and cheesy smile across a country market stall.

Mr Matthews joined the civil service in 1971 when, after several years lecturing on chemistry in Canada and Katmandu, he and his wife, Jane, returned to Britain in the middle of a recession.

He did well as a tax man in his native Cumbria, buying a large farmhouse outside Penrith, with breathtaking views over the fells. He was asked to move to London, but refused, and this made him take stock of his life. Suddenly he realised he hated his job.

By now, Mrs Matthews had given up her nursing job to bring up their two children, and had started a small restaurant in their farmhouse. A gifted cook, she sold the extra cakes and scones she baked at Penrith market. Which gave Mr Matthews an idea.

"We had noticed that Penrith didn't have a good delicatessen," he says. "I like cheese and I happened to have a cheesemaker friend. One day, he brought down 130lb of cheeses and said, 'try selling these'." Now he sells about 2,000lb of cheeses a week—northern varieties

a speciality—travelling between five markets. His business turns over £250,000 a year.

He was keen to track down local farmhouse producers partly because of transport costs and because, as he puts it, "the smaller the operation, the better the cheese; they take more care".

To his surprise, he discovered a fraternity among the small producers. "They're very keen to pass names on," Carolyn Fairbairn, who makes an unpasteurised Cumbrian cheese, told him she had heard that Ian Hill, up in Ribblesdale, was making a goat's cheese. "As it happened, it was revolting; terribly soft, almost like a paste. But he learnt quickly. Now his cheeses are superb." Mr Matthews says, adding: "He dropped out of the rat-race too; he used to make aeroplanes."

Like a scout with his pen-knife, Mr Matthews is rarely without his cheese iron. Similar to an apple corer, it takes a section through the cheese allowing him to check smell, texture, appearance and taste. Woe betide any blue stilton which is pale and chalky instead of buttery yellow, or cheese that sticks to his finger. "Most cheeses, particularly northern ones, should be crumbly



Counter attraction: Joe Matthews behind his well-stocked market stall, like a mini delicatessen

in texture," he says. "A very mature cheddar is the only cheese that should be firm and dry."

He sells about 150 varieties, ranging from the mild, crisp flavoured Wensleydale and Ribblesdale to tasty Lancashires (virtually unobtainable outside the county), from the creamy, bribe-style Bonchester (Scottish) and Castledale (Irish) to nutty two-year-old Cheddars. Some are smoked, others flavoured with garlic, or a choice of eight different herbs. Some are from unpasteurised milk. He also has goat's and ewe's milk cheeses.

Rarities among British farmhouse cheeses include the gouda-

style Redesdale and the bunery, semi-soft Swaledale, with its delicate mould reminiscent of an Italian Bel Paese.

Constantly on the look out for new cheeses—he is keen to find a good goat's cheese—Mr Matthews's only limitation is what he can fit on the stall, which takes two hours to set up and can mean leaving home at 5.30am.

Almost spilling over the front of the stall are his wife's home-made cakes, breads, preserves and pâtés; her rum butter, lemon curd and rhubarb and ginger jam are particular favourites with customers. To buy her bread, however, they need

to make a dawn raid and queue.

Mrs Matthews still works part-time as a nurse at Carlisle Infirmary and bakes bread on only three days a week. "And I don't let her do anything on Sunday," Mr Matthews says. "That's our day off, when we garden or play croquet."

HELEN PICKLES

Joe Matthews is at the following markets: Monday, Cockermouth; Tuesday, Penrith; Wednesday, Brampton; Thursday, Whitehaven; Saturday, Keswick. Cheeses can be bought by mail order from Roundthorn Farmhouse, Beacon Edge, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 5SJ (0768 62299, after 6pm).

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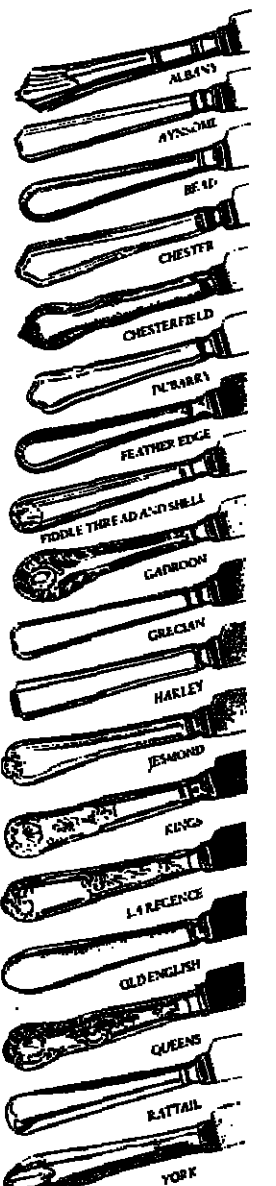
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Farmers are planting a valuable new crop: animal attractions for the youngsters. Lee Rodwell reports.

Cashing in down on the farm

If Old Macdonald was around today he'd probably be running a Farm Attraction. There would be trailer rides and displays of old farm machinery, farmhouse teas, and sheep shearing to an animal chorus of moo-moos and oink-oinks.

Surveys suggest that more than a third of Britain's farmers have developed some form of non-agricultural business, and a growing number are beginning to think of visitors as another cash crop.

"There's been a lot of copy-cattling," Delwyn Matthews of the West Country Tourist Board says. "We joke that you can't talk about rare breeds any more because they are becoming so common."

Even so, he admits that a professionally run farm attraction can offer good value as a family day out.

The young visitors at the White Post Modern Farm Centre in Nottinghamshire would not doubt agree — if they had time to think about it between oohing and aahing at the chicks, feeding the kid goats, stroking the piglets, meeting Lionel the llama and watching the inhabitants of the farmyard mouse-ow.

White Post Farm is open all year, and even on a chilly March Sunday, it attracts 1,500 visitors. The man behind the centre is farmer's son Tim Clark, who has turned what used to be his father's piggyery and 15 acres of farmland into an award-winning tourist attraction.

"Children like to get close to animals," he says, "and it's an opportunity for them to learn about modern farming in a way that's fun. Even children who grow up on the farms may not know about different animals, because their farm is all arable, or all pigs or all dairy cattle."

Mr Clark knows the importance of the "aah" factor. The 3,000-egg incubator is always working and the day-old chicks, quail or ducklings never fail to delight. He also breeds Dorset sheep because they breed throughout the year.

Godstone Farm in Surrey is in its twelfth year as an "educational" farm. Richard Oatway, the farm

manager, says: "The children may have read about farm animals, even seen them on television, but it's different when they can touch them. And they are often amazed by all the noises, the lambs bleating, the ducks quacking."

Families looking for something rather more exotic than ordinary cows, pigs or sheep, should head for a farm specialising in rare breeds. At Rare Farm Animals of Hollingbury in Kent, Brian Brooks has devoted 100 acres of his 480-acre farm to a wide range of such animals. He rears off an impressive list: "We have Eriskey ponies, Exmoors, mini-Shetlands — they're great characters. We've got White Park cattle, short-leg Dexters and Belted Welsh Highlands, Portland sheep, grey-faced Dartmoors and Castle Milk Moorhairs — they're my favourites, like peas in a pod. As for pigs, there are Tamworths and Middle White Berkshires and Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs."

Rare Farm Animals was set up in 1985. "We've been going so long now that the animals we have now were people from day one," Mr Brooks says. As a result, it's not unusual for visitors to witness dramatic moments, such as the time one of the mares foaled on a Sunday afternoon. "There must have been 400 people applauding every stage," he says. "And when the foal staggered to his feet they all clapped. Goodness knows what the mare made of it all."

Not all farms are in the country. There are about 60 city farms dotted around Britain, flourishing on what was once derelict land. In London there are a dozen, including those in Hackney, Battersea, Kentish Town, Shoreditch, Stepney and the Isle of Dogs.

College Farm in Finchley, north London, is the nearest purpose-built farm to the centre of London. Set up more than 100 years ago by Express Dairies as a showcase dairy farm, it is leased by Richard and Jane Owen from the Department



Cheep day out: a young visitor makes friends at the White Post Farm centre in Nottinghamshire

of Transport, which bought the land for a road-widening scheme. "We originally set up as a riding stable," Mrs Owen says, "but we had some sheep and goats of our own. Local schools kept asking if they could come and visit so eventually we dropped the riding and set up as a farm centre."

College Farm is open all year, but on the first Sunday of every month the Owens hold a country fair, with entertainments including donkey and cart rides, arts and crafts, refreshments and competitions. This month there was an added

attraction: one of the sows produced a litter of seven piglets. "People were fascinated," Mrs Owen says. "They'd stay to watch for a bit then wander off for a while before coming back to see how many more had been born. Only a farm can offer that kind of magic."

● Farmers in some areas have linked up to promote farm attractions: leaflets are available from the Nottinghamshire Farm Tourism Group (0623 882977), Cumbria FTG (0448 8323), and Northamptonshire FTG (0858 462340). Also local tourist information centres. For full details about city farms, send an

SAE to The National Federation of City Farms, Avon Environmental Centre, Junction Road, Bristolton BS4 3TP.

● College Farm, 45 Fitzalan Road, London N3 (081-349 0690): open all year, 10am-5pm. White Post Modern Farm Centre, Farnfield, Notts (0623 882977): open all year Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm; Sat and bank holiday Mon 10am-6pm. Rare Farm Animals of Hollingbury, Mill Lane, Hildenborough, near Sevenoaks, Kent (0732 832276): open every day from April until the end of Sept, 10.30am-5pm. Godstone Farm, Tilbury Hill, Godstone, Surrey (0883 742546): open now until the end of Oct, 10am-5pm.

Events

LONDON

□ Boom room: Lively concert for seven to 11-year-olds, with John Harle on saxophone and clarinet, accompanied by John Lenehan on piano. A fresh approach to music from Bach to Duke Ellington. Purcell Room, South Bank SE1 (071-928 8800). Today 3pm. £1, child £2.

□ Boat races: The Head of the River race today from Mortlake to Putney begins at 11.45am, with the 420 crews leaving at ten-second intervals. Lasts about one and a half hours. Best view is from the Surrey bank above Chelsea bridge. Be early.

□ Polka show: First of the Easter children's shows is The Enchanted Lamp, the story of Aladdin presented by Lambeth Children's Theatre Company, using shadows, masks, lifelike puppets. Recommended ages from five to 11.

Polka Children's Theatre, 240 The Broadway, SW19 (081-543 4888). Today and next Sat, 2pm and 4pm. £4.50.

□ Sky high: "Things to do and see in the dark" — a talk about red giants, black holes and blue stragglers by David Maffin, from the Anglo-Australian observatory. Lecture theatre, Science Museum, Exhibition Road, SW7. Further information on 071-938 8080. Tomorrow 2pm. Lecture free: museum £3.50, child £1.75.

□ Fishy tale: The Jactio Puppets present The Enchanted Swan, the story of a crayfish who wants to be a land-lubber as well as an amphibian, and the bird which helps him in his dilemma.

Tricycle Theatre, 269 Kilburn High Road, NW6 (071-328 1000). Today 11am and 2pm. £2.75, child £1.75.

NATIONWIDE

□ Keighley coasts: A Mothering Sunday event with a "step up" afternoon tea and small gift for mothers, plus a special menu for children, who will also be able to make presents of cards and posies. East Riddleston Hall, Bradford Road, Keighley, W. Yorks (0535 607075). Tomorrow 2-4pm. £6, child £2.

□ Arundel outing: Children can see courting ducks, geese and swans, look at the new Antarctica photographic exhibition, be given a bunch of daffodils for their mothers. Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Mill Road, Arundel, West Sussex (0903 883355). Tomorrow 9.30am-5.30pm. £3.50, child £1.75.

□ Bristol chorus: The city's Junior Choir celebrates its tenth anniversary in a concert with the Bristol Chamber Choir, featuring the premiere of Four Lullabies, a light-hearted work by Andrew Tyrell. The groups will also sing family favourites, from Purcell to present-day composers.

St George's, Brandon Hill, Bristol (0272 230359). Thurs, 7.30pm. £3.50, child/student £2.

□ Chatham pirates: Graduate students from the Arts Educational School perform Gilbert and Sullivan's The Pirates of Penzance in the Georgian dockyard church. Historic Dockyard church, Chatham, Kent (0634 812551). April 1-4, matinees Fri, Sat 3.30pm. £4.50, child £3; Wed-Sat 7.45pm. £5.50, child £3.

□ Maidstone in spring: Though essentially for adult gardeners who can meet experts, take tours, listen to talks and watch flower arranging demonstrations, children will enjoy a visit to the beautiful Kentish castle. Leeds Castle, Maidstone, Kent (0622 765400). Today-April 5, 11am-5pm. £6.20, child £4.20.

□ Poole plot: The Magic Storybook is presented by the Oxford Stage Company in association with Oxford Playhouse. Each story is staged in a different style and includes tales such as Jack and the Beanstalk and little known stories from abroad. Towngate Theatre, Poole Arts Centre, Poole, Dorset (0202 885222). April 2, 1.30pm, April 4, 2.30pm. £6.50, child £4.50.



Bunch of thanks: a little gift for Mothering Sunday

□ Singleton past: Mothering Sunday at the open air museum. Lots of different historic buildings for children to explore. Free entry and a bunch of flowers for mothers taking their children. Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, Singleton, Chichester, W. Sussex (0243 63348). Tomorrow, £3.60, child £1.75, family ticket £9.

□ Skipton steaming: Trains decorated with flowers, and small gifts for mothers taking their children for a ride on this attractive railway. Embury Station Railway, Embsay, Skipton, N. Yorks (0756 794727). Tomorrow. Trains hourly 11am-4pm. £2.50, child £1.20.

□ Totnes ramble: Older children with an interest in the environment should enjoy this walk along the river Dart with Mike Mainin, a river warden. Dress suitably: take a packed lunch. Meet at the Old Bridge, Totnes, Devon (ref SX 806603). Tues, 10.30am, return by 3.30pm. £1, child 50p.

JUDY FROSHAUGH

071-481 1920

SATURDAY RENDEZVOUS

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Why the lambs and I are getting high on grass

FARMER'S DIARY: PAUL HEINEY

I have contracted an infectious disease. I have grave suspicions that I caught it from the sheep. The symptoms are disturbing: you suddenly find yourself walking with a jaunty gait as if everything were well with the world; a song forms on your lips and a smile appears on your face where all winter has been a weary frown. Instead of worrying about what disasters may befall the budding crops, you see only how well the land looks, how straight the furrows. Songwriters would call it love; but the sheep and I know it is something different.

It is nothing to do with the weather. In fact, after a deliciously mild spell we are once again raked by icy northerly winds. But an unmistakable feeling of elation is on us.

The sheep sensed it a couple of weeks before I did, and the little lambs sniffed it even before their experienced mothers. Yet it took

two days of liberation from the lambing-pens before the symptoms first appeared. Sheep do not like change, and even though they were freed from the enclosure of the farmyard and put out to grass, they still bleated pitifully to be brought home at night in the hope that delicious food might be laid before them in troughs. But lying at their feet was a rich feast, finer than any bucket could carry. The spring grass was shooting forth with vigour: packed with nourishment, it only they realised it. It would have been easy to have succumbed to their pleadings and brought them home had I not remembered a great truth I discovered tucked away in a shepherd's memoirs. "Sheep," he said, "are not stupid. They just need time to think." So I

gave them time, and soon they were tucking in enthusiastically.

The effect of the grass on the lambs was dramatic. Made healthily plump by a rush of revitalised milk, they bounded round the field as if propelled by elastic bands. First they ran this way and that; and then, presumably having had time to think about it, decided it would be more fun to run a race. So began the Lambs' Grand National, which seems to have its starting line near the trough and finishes eight acres away near the gate. Some just ran, others leapt along like liberated kangaroos and others, drunk on mothers' milk, flung themselves into the air with such vigour that they landed facing the other way and fled backwards. It took them a



long time to think that one out. But my own feeling of well-being comes as much from the look of the lambs. We are now beginning our second full year and all the plans we have worked so hard to accomplish

are gradually paying off. Like the meadow on which the lambs frolic, I sowed the seed this time last year and watched its feeble attempts to grow as it took successive assaults from frost and, worse, drought. It never really grew at all last sum-

mer, merely raising sad wisps of fragile green that were never destined to flourish. The weakness of the grass was matched only by the strength of the weeds, and by the middle of the year I had a fine meadow of thistles, poppies, nettles and docks. But no grass.

I was on the point of giving up, ploughing the field, and consigning the notion of organic growing to the back-burner. After all, had I wanted to apply chemicals to kill the weeds and fertilise the grass, I could easily have done so. Instead, I took advice from one of my aged farming textbooks and merely took the mower to it. The horses and I dragged that rickety old mower up and down for the best part of two days and then turned our backs on the field, not even bothering to clear what we had cut. The weeds once more took hold, the grass maintained its modesty, I checked the textbooks once again and when the horses gave me a cold stare, I asked

a friend to do the second round with his tractor.

By mid September the magic started to work. The weeds had vanished, the grass had woken from its unnaturally long slumber. Back from the grave it is now as green and thick as the Wembley turf, with hardly a weed in sight.

Is it any wonder that I am cheered, not only to see success snatched from the jaws of disaster, but to have the young lambs joining in the celebration? Add to that the contented cows who are sniffing the air and dreaming of days soon out at pasture; and the hard-working horses still shuffling around winter's strawed yards, but looking forward to their first mouthful of the scented grass they helped to grow.

Cull of the wild for shooters

The deerstalking season opens on Wednesday. Ronald Faux joins a group of aspirant stalkers in Scotland

When the high-powered rifles appear on the forest range, Dave Goffin swaps his battered deerstalker hat for a red and white striped baseball cap, which stands out like a beacon among the camouflage jackets and khaki fatigues. "It may look daft but I like to be very plainly visible," he says, as his class of stalkers line up to take aim at a cardboard buck 100 yards away.

Mr Goffin insists that safety is the first essential of stalking and the most important element of the course. The urge to stalk, to move as silently as shadows using cover and stealth to arrive undetected within killing distance of the quarry, is an ancient, probably prehistoric instinct.

Whatever the psychological undergrowth this instinct rests in, no sport gives it better expression than stalking wild deer. Their lack of natural predators makes culling a practical necessity.

But the British Deer Society, which cares for the status and management of the six species of British wild deer, is concerned that the relative freedom of British stalkers could be threatened by European Commission regulations. If regulations are to be laid down, the society argues, they should be fashioned to suit British traditions. And nobody has a better understanding of these than the British Deer Society.

So, down to the 15,000 acres of Kirkhouse Forest in the Borders and the shooting range, where a group of a dozen or more aspirants are taking the society's basic stalking course. There are lairds and landowners, a builder, bus operator, marine biologist, keepers who care for deer herds in Invernesshire and Epping Forest, and a man so lost in the sport that he wears his deerstalker from breakfast to the nightcap dream.

Deer are to a large extent responsible for their own destruction. When crops are damaged and forests grow larger than their forest area will support, then the condi-

tion of both trees and deer run into parallel decline. Kirkhouse Forest has the scars of deer grazing. In places there are conifers that should be standing 10ft tall stunted to the size of shrubs by the constant nibbling of roe deer.

Dark clouds trail sheets of rain across the Moorfoot Hills as the stalkers prepare to demonstrate their shooting skills. They are dressed in a mixture of muddy camouflage and marmalade tweed, which blends with the woodland. Mr Goffin puts on his beacon hat.

When the season opens in the United States "buck fever" is apt to sweep the stalking community. Despairing farmers even label their livestock in large letters to warn off the shooters.

Mr Goffin recalls the cautionary tale of an American answering nature in the undergrowth whose bare behind was mistaken by a fellow stalker for the prominent white "target" of a buck roe.

The lethal power of a deer rifle is phenomenal. A bullet unimpeded will travel four kilometres. The soft-nosed ammunition the law requires does not graze or inflict flesh wounds, it tips off an entire limb. "Any shot has to be spot on, straight into the engine room," Mr Goffin says.

British law allows anyone with a firearms certificate to shoot over land they own or have the owner's permission to stalk, and the UK is one of the few countries where the right to shoot game does not belong to the state.

In Germany, where stalking law is one of the last remnants of legislation introduced by the Third Reich, the rules are strict and stalkers must serve probation under a registered gamekeeper. Examinations cover wide areas of countryside lore. A German aspirant stalker will be asked to identify 50 species of flora and fauna.

In France the opposite applies, and the *droit de chasse* brought in with the egalitarianism of the French revolution allows an open season on any beast, anywhere. The brief



Safety first: deerstalking rifles are so powerful that from 100 yards an on-target bullet can tear off a deer's limb

duck shooting season in Italy is equally without restriction and results in a high casualty rate among shooters and quarry.

The rain pours down on the woodland clearing as the stalkers try to place four shots in the "heart" of the cardboard deer from 100 yards, which is the minimum stalking distance they must reach before attempting a kill.

Therein lies the skill. In the whole of Kirkhouse Forest there are probably no more than 300 deer. Their sense of smell and hearing, added to their ability to detect the slightest movement and then melt into the forest, are their best protection.

A stalker must read the ground, watch the wind direction, anticipate where the deer might be and move with infinite care and patience to set up his shot. A bullet takes two-tenths of a second to strike target. Mr Goffin admits: "I

don't particularly enjoy it after squeezing the trigger.

"I look at the beast lying dead and wonder what gives me the right. Sometimes I could chuck my rifle in the ditch and say 'that's it', but it has to be done. The alternative is deer starving to death."

This aspect attracts one north country landowner to the course. Deer have been around a long time, he says, and are still not fully understood. But when stalking is commercially vital to a forest estate it is important to learn more. He sees deerstalking as an intellectual exercise. "You have to read the animal's mind," he says, "because you can be sure the animal will be reading yours. I'm afraid deer take more patience than I possess."

British Deer Society, 0734 841094. For further details on the stalking course contact the Tweed Valley Hotel, Walkerburn, Peeblesshire (0898 87636).

The long-dead huia sings again

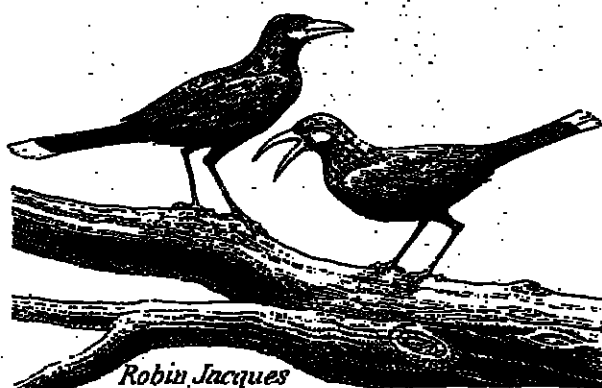
Feather report

This must be the saddest recording ever made. Haunting, plaintive, indescribably melancholy, the record gives us the long, mournful whistle of a bird that went extinct 85 years ago: five minutes of song from a bird that will never be seen again.

The song of the huia has been recreated by David Hindley using a computer and synthesiser and forms part of a collection of birdsong: a collection with two extinct, nine threatened and two vulnerable species. It is a beautiful and spooky business to play the sound of a long-extinct bird in your living room.

All the birds are worth listening to, but it is the huia that steals the show: the huia, formerly of North Island, New Zealand, that became extinct in 1907. It had always been hunted by Maoris but the white settlers managed to finish it off: habitat destruction and introduced predators and diseases did the job.

The huia was a bizarre bird. Male and females, uniquely among all bird species, had differently shaped bills: the stout-billed male tore the bark from trees; the female used her long, slender bill to bore out grubs. Co-operation between the sexes was essential for survival. The huia's plumage



Record achievement: the huia bird, extinct for 85 years

was black with a metallic green gloss, and they had jolly orange patches on the face.

The huia's call was singular and lovely, and apparently lost forever — until Mr Hindley came along. "I have been living with the bird for the past six months," he says. Few people spend as long with an extinct bird.

His first hope was that some 19th-century eccentric had taken a wax-cylinder recorder into the forests to record one of the last huia, but no such luck. There were no recordings, but there were extant recordings of huia impersonations. In 1954, a Maori called Henare Hernana was recorded whistling an impressive range of huia calls. He was 80 years old, but this is not the

sort of call you would forget. Confirmation of the Henare impersonation came with the discovery of two other recorded fragments of huia mimicry, one of them from a swagman called Bogl.

Mr Hindley then gleaned as much as he could from books, bearing in mind that written descriptions of birdsong are notoriously problematic.

Mr Hindley discovered that two authorities had recorded huia song in musical notation. "Musical notation cannot give the exact duration of the song, and it cannot give the quality, the colours of the sound."

The next stage was to add intuition to research and combine the two with high technology. Equipment gives Mr Hindley control of microtones

of tiny fractions of a tone. Every sheep and chirrup was individually notated.

"New Zealand birdsong is very different from European," he says. "It is much less melodic, much more textural. I used the tui as the basis for the colours of the huia song." The tui is a New Zealand forest bird, iridescent metallic green and prone to outbreaks of aerobatics.

No one can say how authentic Mr Hindley's results are, of course. It is doubtful if anyone living has heard a huia. The effort, however well researched, remains speculative: ultimately quixotic.

But not futile. About 100 species of birds have gone extinct in the last 300 years; 1,000 species are threatened with extinction. The melancholy whistle of the long-dead huia is the one of the most eloquent conservation sermons I have ever heard.

SIMON BARNES

Life song, produced in conjunction with the International Council for Bird Preservation, is obtainable from leading record shops or by mail order from Mankind Music, 32 Aldridge Road, Villars, London W11 1BW. Cassette £8.50, CD £12.99.

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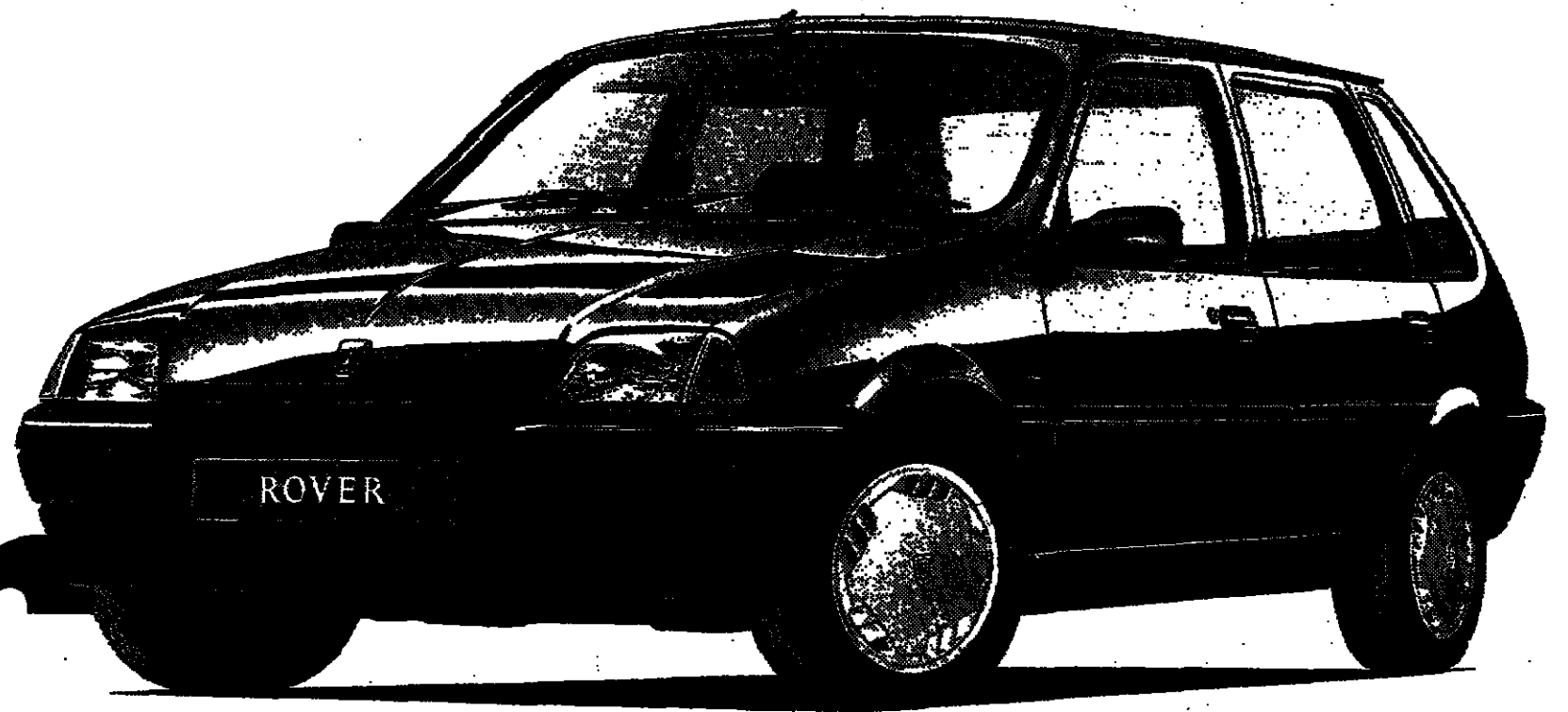
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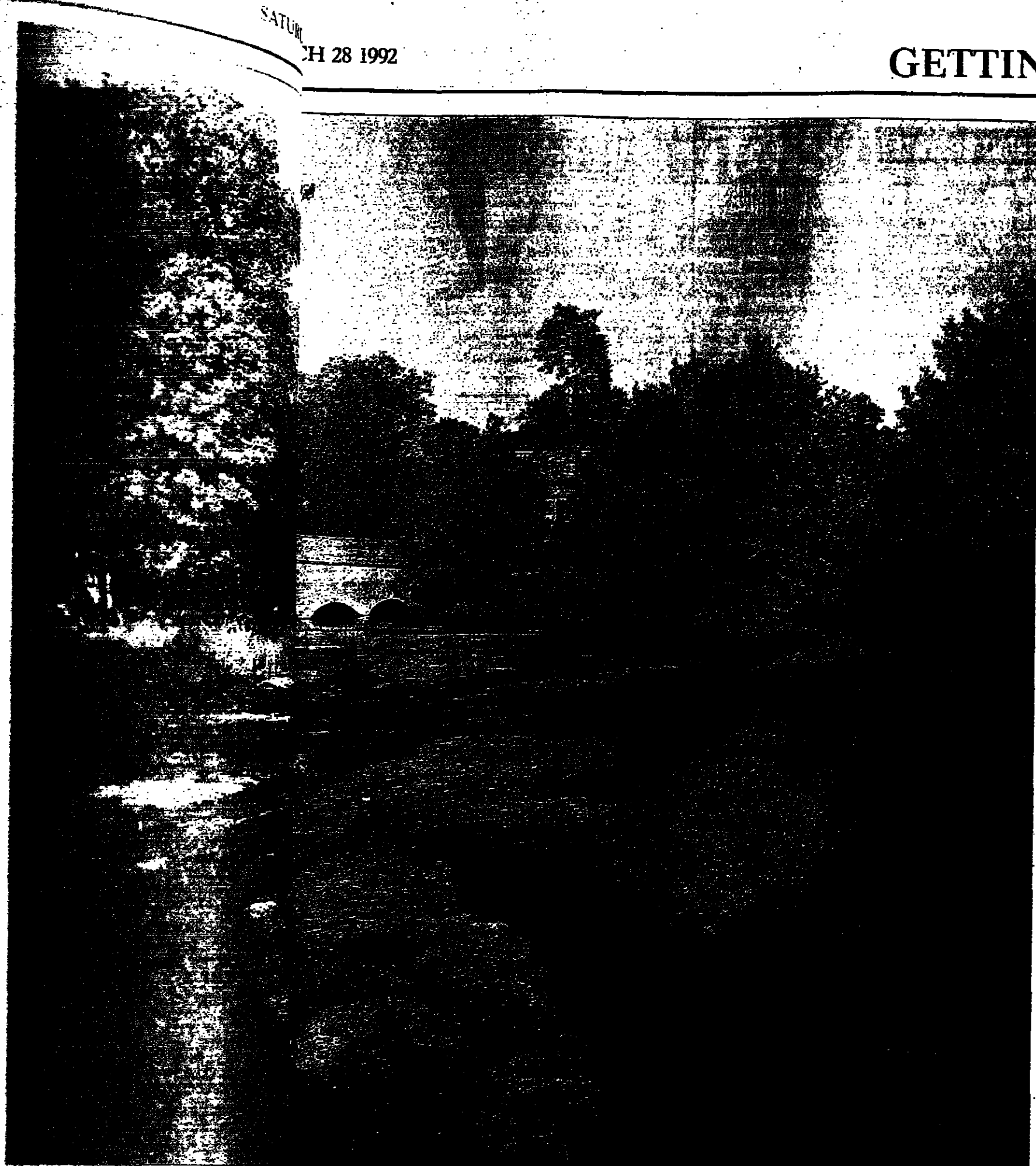
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دکتران و محققان



Water shelters plump brown trout. Between Houghton and Horsebridge the divided river flows under ancient bridges



Water sport: anglers travel thousands of miles and pay dearly to fish on the Test

across the valley on a way probably laid by the last century bridge races, on the high led between Danebury and Chantilly Hill, were as notable as Goodwood or the Edward VII stayed at the House and Little Langley, neatly connected by a private bridge across the stream. The Grosvenor Hotel in bridge is headquarters of

the Houghton Club, most renowned of fishing clubs. The first-floor room, protruding from the hotel frontage like a signal box overlooking the street, is the club's meeting and dining-room. The Houghton limits itself to 24 members, recruited by invitation. Arthur Rackham, Sir Edwin Landseer, J.M.W. Turner, like Eisenhower and the Prince of Wales are among the famous who fished the club waters as guests. The road from Houghton

village to Horsebridge, botanically across the divided stream on a swift succession of little bridges, ending at a mill beside the John o' Gaunt pub (the King of Castle and Lion had his deer park here) and Horsebridge's railway station, perfectly preserved with carriage, signals, station lamps and porters' barrows, all in a time-worn cocoon straddling the long-derelict line. At Mottisfont, the abbey's walled garden on the river bank shelters the national collection

of old roses under the protection of the National Trust. On the hills opposite, at Ampfield, the county council maintains one of the largest and most attractively presented collections of trees and shrubs in the British Isles at the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum.

Thence it is a short run to the principal town on the Test, Romsey, a charmingly old-fashioned market town where television's Inspector Wexford keeps discovering fresh corpses. The Test's final grand flourish is to water the great park of Broadlands, the Palladian home of Palmerston, Lord Mountbatten and now Lord Romsey.

From there the river slides, barely visible from the road except for a tidal reach by the railway at Redbridge, through a nature reserve of estuarine reed beds at Nursling and out to Southampton Water.

Only pedestrians, birdwatchers and salmon fishers should pursue it thus far: motorists are likely to find themselves too entangled in industrial estates and suburbia to derive any further enjoyment.

Mrs J.M. Canclott Julian Critchley's article "Housman's Shropshire" (February 1) failed to acknowledge Mrs Canclott's copyright in the Ludlow branch of the Housman Society's leaflet, *In Valleys of Springs Of Rivers*, which he used as source material.

People choose where to stay based on what is offered on the breakfast menu

versus the bacon set

TONY McSWEENEY



to work on an egg" has not lured them to change their habits. Doctors may tell that they would do better eat their fast earlier and lunch, but for many, lunch is an important passage in the day and they don't fancy that break being rated by a quick sandwich at desk.

I know it's weak of me, but if I am offered a three-course breakfast menu when staying at a hotel, only too often I end up being a three-course glutton... and regret it. I know there are plenty of others who are similarly fallible. The "generosity" of the hotel which provides a substantial breakfast to all its guests is

suspect. It frequently means that the people who are not used to a large meal in the morning, but who nevertheless accept the challenge, end up feeling like an over-stuffed turkey or else they leave half the meal behind, so it becomes a case of conspicuous consumption and conspicuous waste.

Others are prudent and accept only what their stomach is used to, in which event they resent the fact that their moderation is in effect subsidising the hearty eater.

In any case, the tariff could be lower if the hotel charged, as they mostly do on the Continent, for the bed or the room, and leave it to the customer to decide whether to take the breakfast or not.

And why should it be breakfast or no breakfast? Why shouldn't we have the same freedom of choice in the morning as we have with an à la carte menu the night before?

That venerable country house hotel, *Graveyard Manor*, outside

East Grinstead, offers a wide range of choices. If you just want tea (Indian, China, Earl Grey or herbal) with toast and home-made preserves, the charge is £2.30. Coffee (filter or decaf) with the above is £2.50.

For £6.50 you can have their Continental breakfast, which includes fresh juices, home-baked croissants, toasted brioche and rolls. And to that you can add on from the menu as little or as much as you wish in the way of extras.

You might feel that at the price you are paying for the room you have a right to expect the breakfast to be thrown in.

But it's not unreasonable that you should pay for what you want rather than having to fork out a statutory sum for bed and breakfast whether you have the appetite for breakfast or not.

Let gargantuan eat as heartily as they wish, but allow the rest of us the privilege to pick and choose.

HILARY RUBINSTEIN

Can breakfast make or break a weekend away? Send your tales of breakfasts wonderful or disastrous to *Weekend Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

WHERE TO WALK



Bright water: at the Mayfly, Testcombe Bridge, deep channels hide monster fish. The indigenous coltsfoot

Enthusiastic hikers will find that the Test Way, which yomps most of the length of the Test, is a well-beaten path. It starts at Inkpen Beacon atop the North Downs and finishes down at the Salmon Leap pub at Totton, on the extreme west edge of the south Hampshire conurbation. Coming through the Bourne valley via Hursbourne Tarrant and St Mary Bourne, the path joins the Test at Middleton in Longparish, and then goes via Wherwell, Fullerton, Stockbridge, Mottisfont and Romsey to Lee and the Lower Test Nature Reserve. The total length is 48 miles.

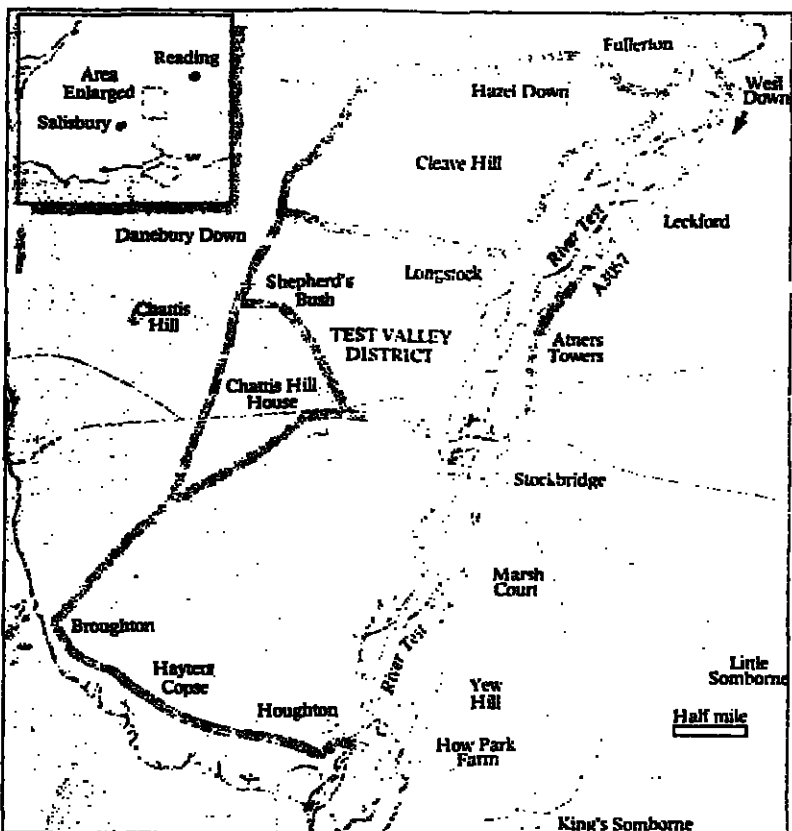
For a shorter, circular route, which also uses part of the Clarendon Way from Salisbury to Winchester, park at West Down car park, where the road from Chilbolton joins the A3057. Take the Test Way southwards from Testcombe bridge by the Mayfly pub, on the line of the dismantled Test Valley Railway (or "Sprat and Winkle Line"), which was built in 1865 on the bed of the Andover to Southampton Water canal.

White gashes in the cliffs to the left show where chalk was dug to fill the waterway. The route passes Leckford with its dumpy, patched-up little church and views across the river valley to Longstock and Hazel Down and under Atmers Towers, through Stockbridge and along the National Trust's land at Common Marsh.

Marsh Court, the white house with high chimneys on a hill to the left, is a Lutyens house with Gertrude Jekyll gardens, now used as a prep school. The hedges are busy with tits and finches and reed warblers breed on the large lake to the right.

The path continues south under Yew Hill to meet the Clarendon Way coming down from How Park Farm. Turn right, crossing the Park Stream and the Park Pale, the old boundary of John o' Gaunt's King's Somborne deer park. A footbridge crosses the Test to Houghton. Follow the Clarendon Way signs, turning left, and then on to the lane to the right which leads on to a path past Hayters Copse.

When Broughton is to your left, turn



right, away from the village on a footpath that leads to the metal road to Chantilly Hill and Danebury Down.

A slightly longer route by footpaths — an alternative to the Test Way — is available by forking right off the road to Houghton Down Farm. Then go down toward Stockbridge, turning acute right back up toward Chantilly Hill via Shepherd's Bush. Then proceed toward The Turret and the tunnel beneath Danebury Ring. At the five-way junction take the green road to the right to walk down to Longstock and turn left to go through Longstock Park, or, if your stamina is still good,

take the northward road to Waters Down Farm and then follow the footpath around the foot of Cleave Hill and beneath Hazel Down to Fullerton, with its grange and mill.

Turn right on to the A3057 to cross the river back to West Down, paying attention to the traffic because there is no pavement. The 16-mile walk will take a full day. It can be cut into two circular halves by crossing the river at Stockbridge. The route can be followed on Pathfinder 1242 (The Wallops) or OS Landranger Sheet 185 (Winchester and Basingstoke). The map reference for West Down car park is SU 384390.

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Behind the stuff of dreams

Francesca
Greenoak visits the first commercial garden centre on National Trust land

Garden centres are selling dreams as much as plants, so it is odd that their decor is mostly unimaginative. Hoping to find an enterprise which broke the mould, I went to the walled garden at the National Trust property at Morden Hall, Surrey, where, for the first time, the NT has invited a commercial company (Capital Gardens) to set up a garden centre on its land.

There is a kind of magic in stepping into a walled garden, and it was at work at Morden: you leave behind the busy A219 for a clear view over the three acres, enclosed by the trees in the 120-acre parkland beyond. Down the centre between grassy banks runs the river Wandle; three graceful single-span bridges conduct customers from the tree-planted parking area through to the forest of pergolas and trelliswork in the distance and to the glasshouses, the NT shop and the furthest plant sales area.

The grand design is the result of four years of planning and negotiation between the partners, with everything down to the colours of the ride-on toys in the children's play area discussed in detail.

The effect is stunning, and I hurried over the nearest bridge for a closer look. Even in March it was warm enough for people to enjoy coffee outside on the terrace between the shop and the river. The adjacent glasshouse entrance takes you into the sales area of houseplants, container displays, terracotta wares and bedding plants. But here I began to feel let down.

After my first impressions I wanted drama and excitement in the sales area too, but the arrangements and interior decor were seriously familiar. I may only want a Mothering Sunday azalea, or pretty basket of African violets, but I yearned for a bit of theatre here too, say a brilliant window-dressing of palms or exotic flowering plants. I felt we needed something comparably eye-catching within the garden centre to match the exterior design.

The same ordinariness persisted in the outdoor section: perfectly nice, good quality plants, but nothing which lifted the spirits.



Blossoming sales team: Colin Campbell-Preston, of Capital Gardens, with his staff at the NT's Morden Hall garden centre, Surrey

Colin Campbell-Preston, the managing director, who is a successful young landscaper and entrepreneur, took me to the beginners' section: good quality easy shrubs such as euonymus, and a display of periwinkles. An acceptable arrangement, but not signalled; most beginners would just walk past.

Poking into an island display we found an unusual correa hung with dainty rose-pink and green flower bells, and some callistemon marked Red Clusters — a good

variety of *C. citrinus*, but there were no hints to the browsing customer, who must consult the staff for all advice. There were very nice camelias, magnolias and dandelions, the root system of which was developed enough to justify prices at the upper

end of the spectrum. Well-grown shrubs in large pots also come dear (in the £60 region) and were good quality but unexciting.

Verdict: top marks for the concept, and a coaxing "should do better" for the sales area.

BEST BUY

A NEW edition of the Royal Horticultural Society's classic reference on vegetable growing, *The Vegetable Garden* (Batsford, £10.95), is out this week. Written by Joy Larkcom, it updates techniques and ideas with information based on the latest research into a range of subjects including organic gardening, cropping patterns and spacings, and pests and diseases. Indispensable for beginners or seasoned gardeners, the handbook also lists recommended varieties.



Taste of summer eating: a young marrow plant starts to flower

WEEKEND TIPS

- Sow early peas.
- Pot dahlias and chrysanthemums; begin to water, then to feed.
- Sow antirrhinums, pinks (dianthus), African marigolds, lobelias, verbena, nicotianas and perennials at 15C/60F (7C/45F after germination).
- Plant early potatoes in colder regions.
- Take cuttings of *Helichrysum petiolare* for container planting later.

MY PERFECT WEEKEND

We ask people in the public eye to reveal the private fantasies that would turn a weekend into 48 hours of pure magic

JOAN WYNDHAM

Actress

Where would you go? Wendover, a Buckinghamshire village surrounded by miles of unspoilt Chiltern countryside.

How would you get there? In my husband's car.

Where would you stay? A thatched cottage with a stream running through the garden.

Who would be your perfect companion? Apart from my husband, chef Anton Mosimann, who would be all set to take over my kitchen.

What essential piece of clothing or kit would you take? An apron with pockets, gardening gloves and some old trousers. In case I feel like a little weeding.

What medicines would you take? Alka-Seltzer.

What would you have to eat? Light, delicious things that take hours to prepare: mousses, soufflés, timbales and roulades. Then on Sunday, Anton would make me a large, fancy steak and kidney pudding.

What would you have to drink? An outrageously expensive white wine with lunch. Glenlivet whisky after six, and a mug of Horlicks as a nightcap.

What would you like to read? My usual holiday crime ration — a new Elmore Leonard, or Dan Kavanagh's *Duffy Omnibus* — very fast, very funny and featuring a bisexual private eye.

What music would you listen to? Jazz FM, with breaks for Monty Python, Vivaldi, Bach and Mozart.

What would you watch on television? Relaxing kitsch like *Blind Date*, Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes, and *thirtysomething*.

What film would you watch? A wonderful wildlife or travel film in which the animals are not hunted, the natives are not shot, the trees are not felled.

Would you play games or sport? Cards every evening.

What luxury would you take? An electric blanket.

Which piece of art? Anything that reminds me of my



childhood, portraits of my mother, or watercolours of woods in spring by my great-aunt Clara.

Who would be your least welcome guest? Claire Rayner, not that I don't like her, but she'd probably make me feel I ought to have problems, even if I didn't.

What three things would you leave behind? My typewriter and manuscripts, unanswered letters and unpaid bills, and my two half-Siamese cats who howl a lot.

What three things would you most like to do? Lie in a deckchair by the goldfish pond listening to someone else mowing the lawn, drive into the hills for a drink at the Russell Arms, go to a village fête.

What souvenir would you buy? Souvenir shops in small country villages are quite awful, so I'd settle for a pot-plant from the local garden centre.

What would you like to find when you got home? The house Hoovered, dishes washed, sheets changed, cats fed and the freezer re-stocked with goodies from Marks & Spencer.

Interview by Rosanna Greenstreet

● The third and final volume of Joan Wyndham's autobiography, *Anything Once*, is now out (Sindclair-Stevenson, price £15.95).

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Riverside suburbia: lock-keeper Roy Dunstan on the bank of the Thames at Windsor in front of Friday Island, once the home of Marmite inventor Dr Julius Grant

Island in the stream

On the Thames at Windsor Callum Murray explores the impractical but idyllic former home of a forensics expert

Windsor Old Lock, on the River Thames. The river is still wide here, and deep; but the noise of the water streaming over the weir does not quite drown out the whine of the Heathrow-bound jets overhead. Just below the weir, where the water is calm, a creek curves off into an arid, landscaped cul-de-sac. Its banks are ornamented with the topiary and lawns of detached houses. On the other side of the river a sign reads "No Overnight Mooring". This is the suburbs on water.

But now step into a rowing boat. A few strokes out into the river and everything changes. The close-cut lawns of the bank recede surprisingly quickly and you are back in the fictional world of English river life, a world in which moorhens whirl and splash noisily away, and there is absolutely nothing half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.

Five minutes' rowing diagonally across the flow from the marine cul-de-sac brings you to the rocky landing stage of Friday Island, so called, it is said, because it is shaped

like a footprint. Tying up, and stepping on to the island through the undergrowth, you find a long, thin, tree-lined stretch of land. The island's edges trail softly, messily into the water, in a tangle of roots and creepers.

Behind the thick screen of willow and philadelphus stands a small, thatched cottage with miniature lawns in front and behind. The cottage is weatherboarded and standing on brick piers. Inside it is white-painted, with a galley kitchen, a sitting/dining area and, in an extension to one side, two tiny bedrooms and a shower room. It has its own electricity and source of water, but otherwise it is primitive.

A verandah looks out over the southerly lawn.

Friday Island's previous owner was the eminent forensics expert Dr Julius Grant — "The Man All Forgers Fear" as the *Reader's Digest* dubbed him in an article — who died last year, aged 89.

Although the cottage already existed when Dr Grant bought the island in the early 1960s, it was he who added the extension and had electricity and a telephone installed. "As soon as he saw the island, he said, 'I'll have it,'" says Roy Dunstan, the lock-keeper, who knew Dr Grant well. "That island was the treasure of his life."

For most of his career, Dr Grant worked as an analytical scientist in the paper industry. Early on, as a research chemist, he developed Marmite ("the strange thing was, he never ate it," his daughter says). He was already in his fifties when he began the forensic work for which he became best known. Dr Grant was involved as an expert witness in a series of notorious cases, including the great train robbery, Tom Keating's forgeries of Samuel Palmer paintings, and, most famously, the exposure of the Hitler diaries as fakes.

Mr Dunstan was completely won over by Dr Grant, although he was already an old man by the time he got to know him. "There aren't many people of 87 who will climb on to a thatched roof," he says.

The island was Dr Grant's retreat from city life. It was sailing that had originally brought Dr Grant to the island and he frequently went out on the river. But the rest of his time he spent caring for the cottage and the island, Mr Dunstan says, repainting the boarding, tending the garden and so on.

Clearly a wooden house surrounded by thick vegetation on an island is bound to require a lot of maintenance. The question is, who would be prepared to pay £180,000 now to spend their weekends crawling about a thatched roof?

Of course, owning an island has a romantic ring to it. But the reality is that the place is likely to appear too unmanicured for the tidy-minded river suburbanite, and too small for

the pop star or urban sophisticate looking for somewhere to invite his friends at the weekend.

Indeed, the whole place has a scaled-down appearance. Dr Grant was a small man, and some of the ceilings and doorways in the cottage are very low.

Inside, mementoes of Dr Grant's tenure remain: old copies of *The Criminologist*, one with an article by Dr Grant; the *River Thames User's Guide*; cane furniture; bottles of sauce, a soda siphon. The idea of leaving these around may have been to avoid giving an air of abandonment to the cottage, but the effect is perhaps too evocative of the former owner. The cottage and island are like a time capsule, protected from the 1990s by the river.

What kind of person would Mr Dunstan like to see succeeding Dr Grant as owner of Friday Island? "I don't expect there are many in the world like him," he says without hesitation. "But if there are, I'd like it to be someone like him."

Friday Island, Old Windsor, Berkshire. Agents: Hamptons Giddy & Giddy 0753 855555.



Bolt hole: Charles II took refuge here at the start of the civil war

Royal roots in splendour

Despite being named after one style of architecture, Queen Anne House is, in fact, Jacobean. And its royal connections were established in the reign of Charles II, when it was the home of his chief minister, Sir Edward Hyde.

Following his father's defeat at Worcester, the young Charles II went into hiding in the imposing red-brick Oxfordshire mansion. After the war Hyde triumphantly escorted the King back to England in 1660 to reclaim his throne, and was rewarded for his loyal service with the title 1st Earl of Clarendon.

The house's royal connections extend still further: Hyde's daughter, Anne, married the Duke of York, who became James II. Although it passed out of the family at the end of the 17th century, the Hyde connection was restored in 1908 when the MP for Westbury, Sir Clarendon Hyde, made his home there. In the 1940s the house was briefly a hospital; it was later returned to use as a family home and split into three, of which Queen Anne House is the main block of the original mansion.

The house, with its original Jacobean sundial over the front door, is approached by a sweeping drive flanked by stone pillars. The two wings, one Jacobean, the other Edwardian, have discreetly concealed entrances.

The garden at the front of the house has rose beds enclosed by wisteria-covered brick walls. Steps lead from the formal garden to two

HOUSE HUNTER

Queen Anne House
Oxfordshire

acres of grass and mature chestnuts.

Within the grounds is a lawn enclosed by 15th-century yew trees. The enclosure is slightly too small for a tennis court, but it would be perfect for a croquet lawn. The grounds have good views of the sweeping Oxfordshire countryside.

The most interesting feature of the interior is the Jacobean panelling: the dining and drawing rooms also have extensive cornicing. The dining room has a large, open stone fireplace and there is some flagging in the hall. There is a large kitchen, utility room, a master bedroom with dressing room and en suite bathroom, six further bedrooms (one self-contained with a tiny sitting room and en suite bathroom), three separate bathrooms, a cellar, double garage and lots of cupboards.

The asking price is, in typical agency speak, "realistic" at £365,000. In the two weeks since the house went on the market, interest has been considerable, says Jacqueline Salkeld from John D. Wood's Oxfordshire office (0865 311522).

RACHEL KELLY

Italian flower power

The British made the Italian Riviera fashionable 100 years ago, and it has kept its snob appeal. The beautiful crescent of coast linking France to Tuscany, stretching from Ventimiglia to Portovenere, remains the magnet for those in search of sun, sea and sophistication, and property prices are high.

This stylish garden apartment (right) within the restored 18th-century Villa Venera, for sale at £298,000, is situated 200 metres from the sea at Bordighera, a resort blessed with a good beach and regal promenades, a few miles east of the French border and Monte Carlo, and an hour from Nice airport.

Set on two floors, with its own entrance, terrace and gate, the apartment has a large living room, designer kitchen and three bedrooms with en suite bathrooms. Most of the rooms are circular, and the property is set in its own garden, with cypress trees and subtropical shrubs.

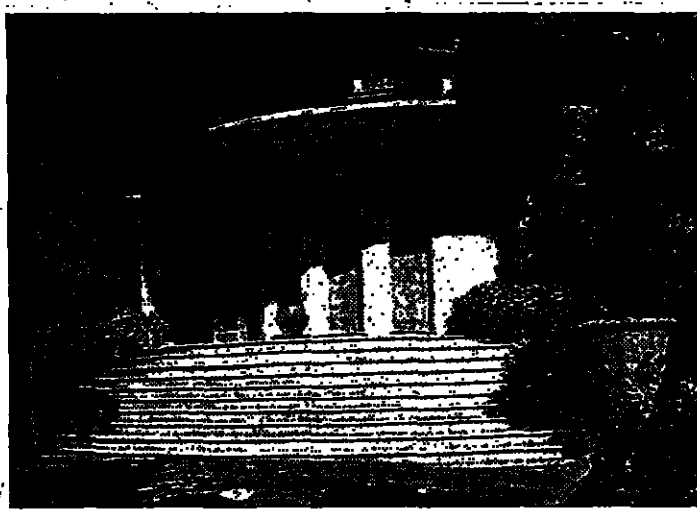
Buyers should allow at least 10 per cent on top of the purchase price to cover agents' fees, notarial charges, taxes and other liabilities. The UK agent is Casa Travella, 65 Birchwood Road, Wilmington, Kent DA2 7HF (0322 660988).

Easily reached by plane to Nice, the region is well placed for Britain and the rest of Europe. Sheltered by the lush Maritime Alps, this part of Italy, especially the coast west of Imperia, enjoys one of the mildest winter climates in the country. Known as the "riviera of flowers", roses and carnations thrive here even in February, and oranges, lemons, palms, olives and vines grow in profusion.

The selection of property available is considerable. There are elegant seaside apartments, narrow, mellow stone harbour-front houses, tall pastel town houses and aristocratic villas in magical settings, under swaying palms with bright gardens.

Property prices vary, largely depending upon location. Villas and apartments in the fashionable resorts, like San Remo, Alassio, Rapallo and Portofino, are more expensive than in many parts of Rome and Milan. A two-bedroom flat in Portofino, a romantic little port that has become a favourite haunt of the rich and famous who own homes there, costs about £500,000; or there are elegant hillside villas from £2 million.

Seaside towns like Bordighera and Ventimiglia, close to the French border, have been English enclaves for more than a century.



Round house: apartment for sale in the 18th-century Villa Venera



Buyers' Italy
ITALIAN RIVIERA

In Ventimiglia, midway between Monte Carlo and San Remo, a small modernised villa on half an acre, surrounded by vast fields of carnations, is currently for sale at £210,000 (agents: Casa Travella). For the same sort of money, you can buy a two-bedroom flat in a period villa set back from the sea in Bordighera.

Prices slip further east around Imperia, the olive oil capital of

Italy, with its bustling port and charming old town. Modern sea-front flats along this stretch of the Riviera, from Imperia to Savona, can still be found from £60,000 for two bedrooms or from £140,000 for a small detached villa.

Some of the most interesting properties are to be found in the hills above Imperia, around the medieval village of Dolcedo, the centre of the best olive groves in the region. Old houses in this area represent some of the best value available, although prices can hardly be described as cheap. A dilapidated village house, with two bedrooms, balconies and roof terrace, starts at £60,000; or there are small hillside villas, shabby but habitable, with a terrace and garden, from £70,000.

CHERYL TAYLOR

Secrets of the Euro-garden

Home from home:

Amédée Turner

When Amédée Turner was 17 years old, his widowed mother moved the family to Westleton in Suffolk. In those days — 1946 — the family put all decisions to a democratic vote. If Amédée wanted to plant a tree, or cut one down, there would be several meetings before he persuaded his mother and his younger sister, Anita, to agree.

Today the garden of The Barn at Westleton has become a magnificent obsession for Mr Turner, QC, the MEP for Suffolk and South East Cambridgeshire.

Much of his 12-acre garden is filled with "rooms", visitors are given a map to guide them around his creative obsession. His current passion is a Pylas garden that echoes the Palace of Mycenae, with each room separated by tall, feathery pampas grass.

Mr Turner has known and loved the house for years. Unchanging and undemanding in terms of maintenance, it is full of ephemera collected over the decades: a roomful of masks for his next garden project (a Maelstrom maze), his collection of walking sticks from around the world, and shelves full of books on Mycenae and on Stonehenge.

He flies the European flag over the house to show when he is in residence, enjoying the relative



Rooms with a view of Brussels: Amédée and Debby Turner in a section of the garden at Westleton

calm most weekends after a week in Strasbourg, Brussels, or both. His London base is a small mews house near Hyde Park Corner, which also serves as his office.

Westleton was converted in 1926 from a Jacobean barn. The house is

art deco, with six bedrooms and a simple layout.

"The garden in front of the house used to be a farmyard," Mr Turner says. "The house was occupied by the army in both world wars. The garage was an army electrical

workshop or school during the second world war, and on the back of the door you can see a series of electrical calculations written in chalk that must have been used to teach the soldiers who were billeted here. When we moved in just after the war it was ruined inside. Soldiers do that: burn the panelling, kick holes in the plaster."

Mr Turner and Debby, his American-born wife, have two grown-up children, Pippa and Andrew. It was for Pippa that he designed what she calls her "Synoptic Garden" for contemplation, although its African masks do little to calm her. Pippa studied at Yale Divinity School and is a candidate for the priesthood in New York. Andrew has worked in Brussels, and usually helps in his father's election campaigns.

Mr Turner, who has been an MEP since 1979, paints every summer in France, where he and Debby own a house near Avignon. Each year he shows his work locally: this year it comprised a series of oils featuring the sun and Stonehenge.

Westleton remains the core of his scattered life. "One day I'd like to live in a pavilion in the garden," he says. He could build it near the newly planted maze or in the many-roomed Mycenaean palace. He will be spoilt for choice among all the garden rooms he has created.

JOY BILLINGTON

Once stately progress halted by bureaucrats

Heap of the week: The Hendry, Monmouth

THE Hendry is a large, intriguing and decidedly quirky Victorian country house, lent lustre by its association with C.S. Rolls, co-founder of Rolls-Royce.

But today it is empty and deteriorating — yet another example of the dangers of giving planning permission to build in the grounds of country houses.

The Hendry lies in attractive, hilly country about four miles northwest of Monmouth in a large and magnificent deer park, sprinkled with delightfully eccentric estate buildings. The landscaping is in large part the work of Henry Milner, among the best of the late-Victorian garden designers.

Three leading architects were involved in successfully transforming the old hunting lodge on the site: first, from 1830, George Vaughan Maddox, designer of a

series of public buildings in Monmouth; then from 1837 Thomas Henry Wyatt, best known for his church at Wilton, outside Salisbury; and finally Sir Aston Webb, architect to the main front of Buckingham Palace.

Then tragedy struck. C.S. Rolls's death in a flying accident in 1910 was followed by that of his father two years later, and his two brothers in the First world war.

In 1966 the estate came to John Harding Rolls, who conceived a plan for turning The Hendry into a timesharing complex and, as the first phase was completed, an 18-hole golf course. However, financial difficulties pushed the property into receivership.

Sanyo Oil (now Sanyed), a Japanese leisure company that bought the surviving 1,100 acres

of the estate in 1987, thought the permission to build 50 chalets in the grounds could easily be revived. The company therefore submitted ambitious plans for restoring the mansion as a club house, introducing a further 18-hole golf course and building a 100-bedroom hotel.

Intense local opposition was excited by the proposals for 100 holiday flats and 80 fairway homes in the grounds, and the proposals were rejected 30 to 1 by Monmouth District Council.

Douglas Ross, the secretary of the Rolls of Monmouth Club, is deeply frustrated. "The club hasn't been viable since opening in 1982. We must have the hotel accommodation. There just isn't any superior hotel accommodation available nearby."

MARCUS BINNEY



The Hendry: the former home of the co-founder of Rolls-Royce

BBC 1

- 6.45 Open University: Biology Form and Function 7.10 Maths "Real" Exponential Functions 7.35 The English Landscape Garden 8.00 Engineering Mechanics 8.25 Physics: Which Way to Turn? (15/45/78)
- 8.50 Playdays (r) (9/43/23) 9.10 News and weather (7/7/72)
- 9.15 Looking For God: The fourth of a five-part series about Discovering God. Graham Young asks what can be learnt about God from other people. (8/33/27)
- 10.00 See Hear! Magazine series for the hearing impaired (7/5/75)
- 10.30 The Software Show. Peter Macann advises on the best software for business use (6/5/42). Wales: Bazaar 10.55 Experiment 11.00-12.30 See You Sunday
- 12.00 Bazaar. Includes Claire Rayner with advice on coping with troublesome relatives (r) (5/74/18) 12.25 Experiment This week - optical illusions (22/22/33)
- 12.30 Country File. John Craven tackles rural issues (6/58/27). Wales: Farming in Wales 12.55 Weather (6/52/53)
- 1.00 News (7/47/75) followed by On the Record. Jonathan Dimbleby interviews the environment secretary Michael Heseltine (6/28/18)
- 2.00 Eastenders. Omnibus edition (r). (CeeFax) (e) (7/65/4)
- 3.00 Film: Grey Lady Down (1978) starring Chastin Heston and David Caradine. Tense disaster movie about an American nuclear submarine that sinks in the Atlantic after a collision and comes to rest on a precipitous underwater ledge with only 48 hours of oxygen left for the crew to survive. Directed by David Green. (CeeFax) (20/94/14)
- 4.50 Ice Skating. Barry Davis introduces action from the world figure skating championships in Oakland, California, featuring the free dance routines (4/7/41)
- 5.50 The Clothes Show. The Brides of the Year celebrate their weddings. Jeff Banks watches Gilly Reeves tie the knot in Nottingham and Ceryn Franklin is in Cardiff to witness Dr Andrea Woodcock's two marriage ceremonies (e) (7/65/9)
- 6.25 News with Maura Stuart. Weather (5/45/4)
- 6.40 Village Praise. A Mothering Sunday edition from the Border country where Pam Rhodes visits Kirk Yetholm, Linton, Howman and Morebathie. (CeeFax) (e) (7/24/17)



Over the border: Phyllis Logan and Ian McShane (7.15pm)

- 7.15 Lovejoy. The dodgy dealer in antiques is with Lady Jane in a gothic Highland castle to help a friend with financial problems. Back in Suffolk, Eric is offered a 17th-century mirror by the father of a young woman with whom he has become smitten. Starring Ian McShane, Phyllis Logan and Chris Jury. Last in the comedy drama series (8/16/75)
- 8.55 So Haunt Me. Paul A. Mendelson's enjoyable comedy comes to an end with the Rokeby's resident ghost willing to disappear if her long-lost daughter can be found. Starring Miriam Karlin, Tessa Peasgood and George Keegan. (CeeFax) (e) (5/4/43)
- 9.25 Screaming. Comedy series, written by Carla Lane, about the effect of one man on three intelligent women. Starring Gwen Taylor, Penelope Walton and Jill Baker. (CeeFax) (e) (4/47/54)
- 9.55 News and Campaign Report with Martin Lewis. (CeeFax) Weather (15/21/4)
- 10.20 Mashed. Introduced by Magnus Magnusson from the King's School, Worcester. The specialist subjects are Dr Johnson, the history of Leicester, cycling and surrealism art between the wars (e) (7/61/5)
- 10.50 Heart of the Matter: Please Miss, Can I Have a Condom? The story behind the court case in America concerning parents' worries over schools providing their children with condoms in order to stem the spread of AIDS (13/43)
- 11.25 The Voice Race. The second of three programmes on the art of political persuasion. Last week's stage of the general election campaign is reviewed by three former party image-makers - Michael Dobbs, Barry Delaney and Tom McNally (7/45/4)
- 12.05 News. The last in the series features interviews with Portugal and Portuguese watching each other's lifestyles (r). (CeeFax) (8/47/25)
- 12.35 Mahabharat (r) (30/4/83) 1.15 Weather (6/52/53)

BBC 2

- 6.35 Open University (5/77/92)
- 12.00 Regional Political Programmes (3/3/3)
- 12.30 Film: The Dollmaker (1965) starring Gene Fonda and Leona Helm. A young Kentucky hill wife with five children reluctantly moves from her idyllic life when her husband gets a job in the Detroit steel mill during the second world war. Directed by Daniel Petrie (5/19/54)
- 2.50 Small Objects of Desire. The snapshot camera (r) (12/33/20)
- 3.10 Opera Seasons: Elektra. Harry Kupfer's production of Richard Strauss's opera. Eva Marton sings the title role in Sophocles' powerful story of revenge in which Elektra vows to avenge her father, Agamemnon's, death at the hands of her mother. Klytemnestra. With the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Claudio Abbado (e) (7/10/30)
- 5.00 Rugby Special. Highlights of the Courage League game between Oriel and Gloucester (e) (28/1). Wales: Swansea v Pontypridd
- 6.00 The Real McCoy. Highlights from the first series of the comedy, starring Curtis and Lennie (3/19/7)
- 6.35 The Money Programme. Peter Jay examines the Liberal Democrat economic policies (4/7/54)
- 7.15 Natural World: For Queen and Colon
- CHOICE: As so often with wildlife films, the real star here is the cameraman. Wasps and bees tend not to reveal their intimate behaviour to the human eye, keeping it hidden in cracks in walls, holes in trees or tunnels underground. But thanks to the latest lighting and endoscope Kevin Fay is able to reveal parts of the wasp and bee culture that would otherwise remain a mystery. The film tries to suggest a parallel between busy bees and busy humans but finds the comparison difficult to sustain. The bee society, based on a breeding queen, female slaves and male drones, can only in just be likened to a human one. Among much intriguing footage is a sequence of a jewelled wasp in Malaysia attacking a cockroach, trimming its antennae and dragging the poor creature into a hole to become a larva for the wasp's offspring (CeeFax) (e) (3/30/7)
- 8.05 Remembrance: The Private Gaze. The second of two documentaries about the 17th-century Dutch painter, Toniait Simon Shama's masterpiece. The artist's attention for society is reflected in his later work (25/6/10)
- 8.55 Trying Times: The Sad Professor. Judge Reinhold, Linda Purl and Stockard Channing star in this tale of angst about a young professor who becomes tired with his successful life and almost perfect wife (6/20/7)
- 9.25 Did You See. Presented this week by Clive Anderson. Peter Cook, Richard Francis and Bernice Rubens comment on LA Law. Talking Rembrandt and The Devil (3/7/14)
- 10.00 Screen Two: The Last Romantic (1992). CHOICE: Given his aversion to popular culture, H.R. Leavis would probably have recoiled at 1991/92 up to the hero of a television film, particularly one showing him in such an unflattering light. Nigel Williams's screenplay explores the relationship between the academic literary critic, played as a staid, chinned parody by Ian Holm, and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (Leo McKern). Leavis's biographer of '19', a man he once loved, is parallel with modern state of Leavis's student to practice love and betrayal in turn. The theme is underlined with the heavy symbolism of a Wordsworth first edition and a climb up a church spire. The film is more comfortable pointing the contrast between the humourous Leavis and the expansive 'Q', a Rumpole figure who sports poetry, fancies jazz or two and refuses to take life morbidly. (CeeFax) (e) (6/6/7)
- 11.30 Film: The Killing (1956, b/w) starring Sterling Hayden and Jay C. Flippen. An early Stanley Kubrick thriller about a former convict who plans a \$2 million race-track robbery (5/28/2)
- 12.50am Rapido. Pop music series (r) (2/7/72). Ends at 1.25



Student and teacher: Ian Holm and Leo McKern (10.00pm)

ITV

- 6.00 TV-am (3/32/27) 9.25 Disney Goes to the Academy Awards. A look at some of Walt Disney's Oscar winners and nominees (3/15/75) 10.15 The Littlest Hobo. Animation (2/15/3)
- 10.45 Link. Stan Vasey asks politicians from the three main parties what they would do if they were offered the chance to be the President of the United States. Today's subject is possessive love (e) (28/45)
- 12.00 Visions. Patricia Alexis talks about the difficulties facing Russia's efforts to revive the idea of charity (2/16)
- 12.30 LWT News Weekend (5/58/33) 12.55 LWT Weather (6/51/07)
- 1.00 News with Carol Barnes. Weather (7/15/14)
- 1.10 Walden. Brian Walden interviews Neil Kinnock (e) (5/71/43)
- 2.00 Mother's Day. Kathy Staff stars as an elderly mother reflecting upon her changing relationship with her son (e) (5/55)
- 2.30 Britain. Classic children's adventure series (7/5)
- 3.00 MacGyver. The US government's secret agent vows revenge when a friend is killed during a diamond robbery (7/54)
- 4.00 The London Match. Highlights from a first division game involving a London club (6/3)
- 5.00 The American March. London Monarchs v Frankfurt (5/47)
- 6.00 Hannah Huwail. Innocent Abroad. The last in the series finds the redoubtable Yorkshire Delevorians in Venice (4/5)
- 6.30 News with Carol Barnes. Weather (7/7/23) 6.35 LWT News and weather (8/6/00)
- 6.40 Highway. Sir Henry Scobie visits Drumlanrig Castle (7/40/13)
- 7.15 The Piglet Files. The first of a new series of the comedy starring Nicholas Lyndhurst as a hapless MI5 agent. (CeeFax) (4/7/52)
- 7.45 The Secret. Patrick Hopkins relates his experiences in Douglas Wilkinson's ecological drama series. (CeeFax) (2/5/78)



Abroad in New York: Hugh Laurie and Stephen Fry (8.45pm)

- 8.45 Jeeves and Wooster. CHOICE: Slipping effortlessly into roles that could have been created for them, Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie launch a third series of Jeeves and Wooster by boarding a luxury liner for New York. On the run from Aunt Agatha and from the lady whom Bertie would like to marry, they are soon pitched into a fresh scrap and probably wished they had stayed at home. The world of P.G. Wodehouse may be chauvinist and elitist, hardly a fashionable agenda for the 1990s, but the comic genius of the man lay in making the idle rich silly and therefore hard to dislike. This is admirably conveyed by Laurie with his popping eyes and sagging mouth, while Fry's Jeeves cleverly suggests the servant who is really the master. The series shares two of its pleasures with Point, a stylish period feel and a sympathetic adapter in Clive Exton. (CeeFax) (5/15/4)
- 9.45 News with Carol Barnes. Weather (2/36/10) 10.00 LWT Weather
- 10.05 Old Boy Network. Comedy series written by Clive Crampton and Ian La Frenais about a private detective agency (7/63/49)
- 10.35 The South Bank Show. Anthony Hopkins. CHOICE: Not many people may know that Anthony Hopkins is a superb mimic. In the course of chatting to Melvyn Bragg he treats us to a Humphrey Bogart, Laurence Olivier, Rod Steiger and Richard Burton. It is inevitable that the conversation should get round to Burton, given the parallels of geography (both come from Port Talbot) and drink. Hopkins relates his alcoholic binge of the early 1970s to the loss of self confidence that had caused him to walk out of Oliver's National Theatre. Before that there was isolation, loneliness and a terrible anger that would well up and assault anyone in its path. He claims to have put his personal problems behind him and says he is glad to be able to play monsters. One of them, Hannibal Lecter, could be said to win him an Oscar. This is one of the deeper South Bank Show profiles (6/23/27)
- 11.35 Cue the Music. James Brown in concert in Berlin (5/85/42)
- 12.35 Extreme East. Youth culture and music magazine (7/68/41)
- 1.05 Derrick. German police drama series (5/21/32)
- 2.15 The ITV Chart Show (r) (e) (1/7/33)
- 3.15 Film: Sherlock Holmes in New York (1976) starring Roger Moore and John Huston. A made-for-television piece of tokum directed by Bruce Segal (5/23/32)
- 5.00 Soap. Madcap American comedy series (r) (4/24/9)
- 5.30 ITN Morning News (7/32/5). Ends at 6.00

CHANNEL 4

- 6.00 Trans World Sport (4/57/7) 7.00 Euroeka's Castle (2/15/2) 7.30 Star Street (3/136/1) 7.55 Chicken Minute (e) (3/22/29) 8.25 Pugwell (7/53/32) 8.55 Little Rosey (e) (3/32/70)
- 9.25 The Sheward of Tipton Sultan Indian drama serial with English subtitles (5/71/45)
- 10.00 Dispatches. A repeat of Wednesday's programme in which the education spokesmen of the three main parties - Tim Eggar, Jack Straw and Matthew Taylor - were asked why Britain's schools fail to cater for the majority of their pupils (5/52/3)
- 11.00 D'Art. Series in which children use sign language to explore the performing arts. With guest Sir Ian McKellen (6/22) 11.30 Trapper. Classic series about a dolphin (7/55)
- 12.00 Little House on the Prairie. The joys and disappointments of Kansas plains life during the 1880s (5/51/5)
- 1.00 Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea. Vintage underwater adventure series (5/51/3)
- 2.00 Film: On the Fiddle (1961, b/w) starring Alfred Lynch and Sean Connery. Comedy with Lynch as the RAF wide-boy who cons slow-witted colleague Connery into helping him in his dubious money-making schemes. Directed by Cyril Frankel (5/35/9)
- 3.50 Sunday. Bloody Sunday. Vincent Hanna and Andrew Ransmay with a Week in Politics alternative general election programme for those who have had too much of the official ones. Live with a studio audience and Steve Norris (Conservative), Austin Mitchell (Labour) and Lord Holmes (Lib-Dem) (4/60/7)
- 5.30 Star Chamber. Subjected to the problems of the computer this week is the Conservative John MacGregor (e) (1/8)
- 6.00 Press Gang. Drama series about the youngsters who run the Junior Gazette (r). (Teletext) (4/87)
- 6.30 The Wonder Years. Nostalgic comedy drama series about growing up in 1960s America (e) (3/49)
- 7.00 Channel 4 News with Jon Snow and Zeinab Badawi. (Teletext) (7/54)
- 8.00 Disabling World: Out of Sight. The second of a four-part series exploring the lives of disabled people in Britain during the first half of the century. (Teletext) (4/43)
- 8.30 Childhood. Part five of the seven-programme series tracing child development (e) (5/64/3)
- 9.30 Burning Books. Includes reviews of Matthew Spender's *Within Tuscany* and Patrick Marham's *The Man Who Wasn't Maimed* and an interview with horror writer James Herbert (5/78/4)

Clerical error: Ian Carmichael and Peter Sellers (10.00pm)

- 10.00 Film: Heavens Above (1963, b/w). A Boulton Brothers comedy starring Peter Sellers as a brash northern vicar, transferred by clerical error to a genteel parish in the Home Counties. With Ian Carmichael. Directed by John Boulton (3/17/43)
- 12.10 Film: Milgram Has Left (1985). An award-winning first feature film by Francesco Rosi about the effects of a 1963-64 television 14-year-old Parisienne on her Italian uncle and her 13-year-old cousin when she comes to her. In French with English subtitles (5/55/5)

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SATellite

- SKY ONE**
- 6.00am Hour of Power (7/25/2) 7.00am Fun (5/37/32) 11.30 The World Tomorrow (6/52/4) 12.00 The Groovy Grooves Meet the Winner Brothers (5/25/7) 1.00pm The Addams Family (4/41/7) 1.30pm (5/25/2) 2.00 All American Wrestling (5/25/2) 2.30pm Eight is Enough (5/25/2) 4.00 The Love Boat (1/45/1) 6.30 The Simpsons (7/8/1) 7.00 21 Jump Street (2/25/2) 8.00 The Last Frontier: First of a two-part mini series set in the Australian outback (4/15/1) 10.00 Falcon Crest (7/8/1) 11.00 Entertainment Tonight (4/58/4) 12.00 Pages from Skyline
- SKY NEWS**
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